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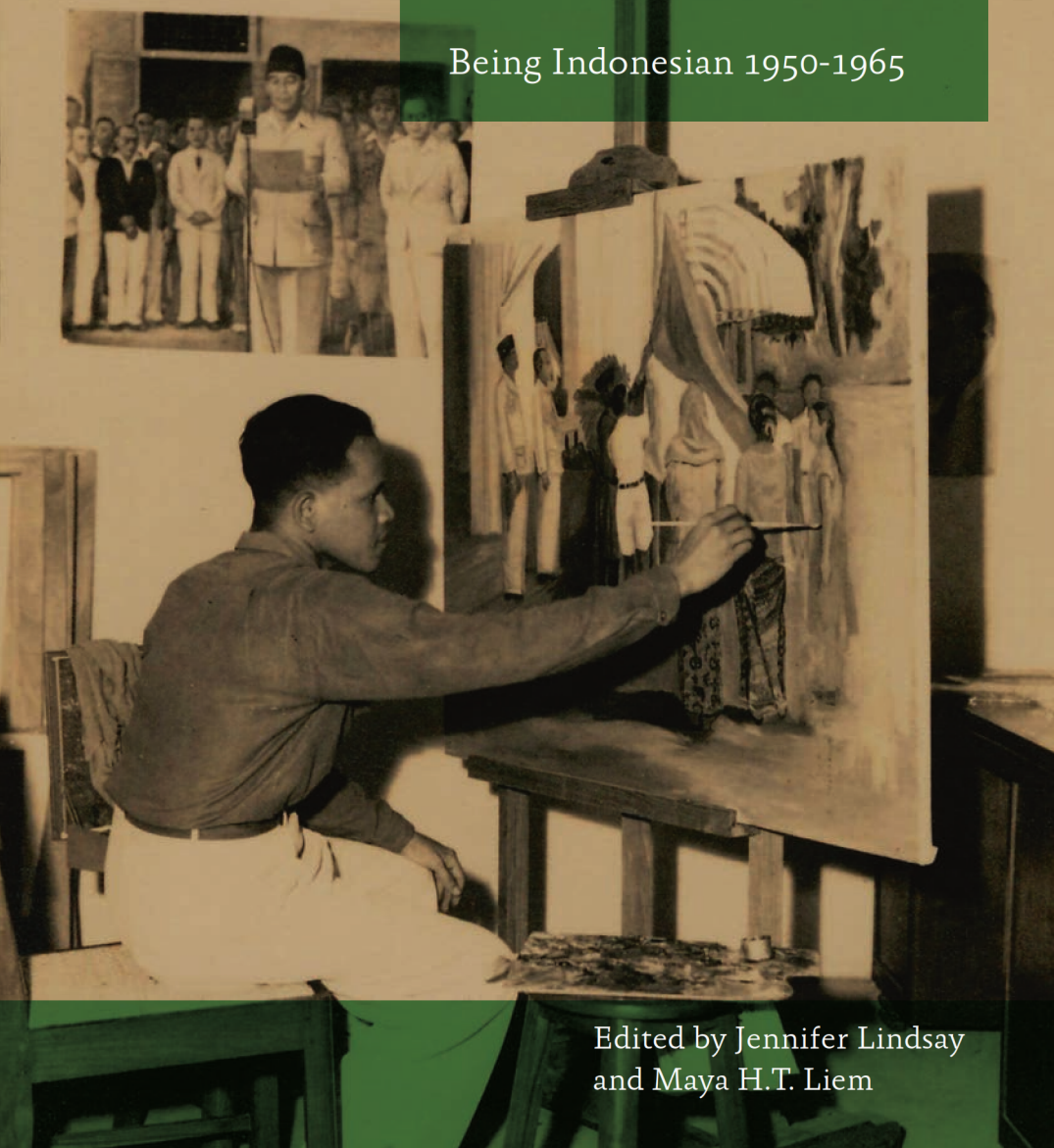
Heirs to world culture

Being Indonesian 1950-1965



Edited by Jennifer Lindsay
and Maya H.T. Liem

Australian National University

HEIRS TO WORLD CULTURE

BHINNEKA TUNGGAL IKA

V E R H A N D E L I N G E N
VAN HET KONINKLIJK INSTITUUT
VOOR TAAL-, LAND- EN VOLKENKUNDE

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HEIRS TO WORLD CULTURE

Being Indonesian 1950-1965

Edited by

JENNIFER LINDSAY and MAYA H.T. LIEM

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The first workshop, titled 'Indonesia's Cultural Traffic Abroad 1950-1965' was held at KITLV Leiden in April 2009. We thank all the participants of that workshop: Tony Reid, Larisa Efimova, Hairus Salim, Budiawan, Liesbeth Dolk, Tony Day, Keith Foulcher, Els Bogaerts, Marije Plomp, Jennifer Lindsay, Maya H.T. Liem and Henk Schulte Nordholt. Ajip Rosidi was invited as an informant and commentator. Harry Poeze discussed publishing issues with us. A public session presenting a summary of the workshop together with poetry and music of the 1950-1965 period was held on the last day of this workshop, and we thank Ajip Rosidi, Gerry van Klinken, Jaap Erkelens, Harry Poeze, Ramona Maramis, Chalik Hamid, Asahan Aidit and Herry Latif for participating in that lively session.

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who attended. Participants were Michael Bodden, Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri, Henny Saptatia Sujai, Abdul Mun'im, Choirutun Chisaan, Melani Budianta, I Nyoman Darma Putra, Marije Plomp, Barbara Hatley, Irawati Durban Ardjo, Els Bogaerts, Hilmar Farid, Tony Day, Keith Foulcher, Budiawan, Hairus Salim, Henk Schulte Nordholt, Maya Liem, Jennifer Lindsay and Roger Tol. Invited as informants and commentators were Sabar Anantaguna, Boen Oemardjati, Misbach Yusa Biran and Goenawan Mohamad.

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Total funding for the project covered only the two workshops, translation and some editing costs. This was not a paid research project. Given that only a few of the participants were full time academics, and indeed only a few had full time employment, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to the writers for their generous commitment to the project, which involved willingness to write on new subjects, pursue new research, and share data. Papers were written in either Indonesian or English. To prepare both English and Indonesian language volumes, all translation of the essays (except for one) was also done within the project, with writers translating each other's papers in order to foster an ongoing dialogue between them. In the editing and translation process, again participants enthusiastically rose to the challenge, and tolerated being pursued, and hassled with seemingly endless editing and translation queries. We also thank Hong Liu, who could not attend either workshop, but contributed a special short version of his *Critical Asian Studies* essay for the Indonesian-language volume.

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Notes on spelling

Spelling of the Indonesian language during the 1950s and 1960s was not standardized. Generally, the modern 'y' (as in Yogyakarta) was still spelt with a 'j' and the modern 'j' (as in Jakarta) was spelt 'dj'. Not always, however, as the crucial word for culture is found spelt both 'budaja' and 'budaya'. The letter 'c' in modern Indonesian spelling for the sound 'ch' as in 'cerita', was always written as 'tj'. The modern 'u' was often still written as 'oe', particularly in personal names.

In this book, modern (post-1972) Indonesian spelling is used. However, the spelling of organizations follows the spelling used in the period of their existence (for instance, LEKRA is Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat). If, however, an organization continued to exist after the spelling change of 1972, its modern spelling is used (for instance, Muhammadiyah).

Spelling of Indonesian personal names follows the use in the 1950-1965 period, or that preferred by individuals for their own names (for instance, Trisno Sumardjo, Soebronto Atmodjo, Misbach Yusa Biran). Frequently, in this period an individual's name is spelt variously (Ajip Rosidi/Ajip Rossidhy; Yunan Helmi Nasution/Junan Helmi Nasution and Soekarno/Sukarno). In this book, in each instance, when names are linked to citations, the spelling follows that used for the citation.

Occasionally, this leads to odd juxtapositions. For instance, this book uses Soekarno throughout as the spelling of the President's name, following the common use of the period. In a few publications, however, his name is spelt Sukarno, thus leading to occasional strange sentences: 'According to Soekarno … (Sukarno 1963:73)'.

Place names use modern spelling, unless in quotations.

All quotations are reproduced in their original spelling.

1

Heirs to world culture 1950-1965
An introduction

Jennifer Lindsay

In the early 1990s I visited Banda Neira, the centre of the fabled 'spice islands', arguably where the history of colonialism in the Indies began, but also a revered site of nationalist history where in 1936 Hatta (later Indonesia's first vice-president) and Sjahrir (later Indonesia's first prime minister) spent six years in exile until released by the Japanese in 1942.[1] In the main square was a small monument to Indonesia's independence – the kind one finds all over the archipelago. This one struck my attention though – because the date on it was not the usual 17-8-1945, the date of the proclamation of independence that is so deeply etched into the Indonesian psyche as the birth of the nation, but 27-12-1949, the date of the official transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch, when Indonesia's independence was recognized internationally.

The December 1949 date on the monument in Banda Neira indicates that until relatively recently there was in Indonesia an element of fluidity about what was perceived as the birth of the nation.[2] Today, the generation that as young adults experienced the events of those dates is passing, and 17 August 1945 has acquired mythic status as Indonesia's birthday. But while *merdeka* (independence) was patchy over the archipelago from August 1945-December 1949, (Banda, for instance, was not part of the ter-

1 I would like to express my sincere thanks to my co-editor, Maya Liem, together with Tony Day and Keith Foulcher for their input and helpful comments when drafting this introduction. I also thank Henk Schulte Nordholt, co-research leader of the 'In Search of a Lost Legacy' project, whose summary at the second workshop held in Jakarta in October 2009 helped shape many ideas here. My deepest thanks to all the participants at both workshops for their stimulating contributions to the discussions that they will find echoed in this introduction. And finally, thanks to the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript who made excellent suggestions for improvement.

2 It might also be seen as subversive local comment highlighting Sjahrir's role in the diplomatic resolution of Indonesia's independence over that of Soekarno as proclamator. Sjahrir is particularly identified with Banda Neira, having adopted three Banda children, including the late Des Alwi.

ritory controlled by the Indonesian republic), by the dawn of 1950 Indonesia's nationhood was a legal fact and Indonesia was officially recognized internationally as a nation among other nations. The fighting had stopped and negotiations ceased, and the business of filling in what '*merdeka*' meant now began in earnest. Culture was at the core of that process.

Over the next 15 years, until the coup and counter-coup of 30 September-1 October 1965 – the period that frames the research presented in the essays in this volume – Indonesia faced enormous challenges, first and foremost that of forging a sense of nationhood to outlast the euphoria of the achievement of sovereignty. In 1950, there was little holding the new nation together beyond goodwill. Administratively, Indonesia inherited a colonial state with its civil service designed for the efficient management of a colonial economy. Politically, it inherited a Dutch-devised and imposed federal system that in mid 1950 was overturned in favour of the unitary republic long envisaged by the Indonesian nationalist movement. Economically, it inherited an extract economy developed for colonial interests (Taufik Abdullah 2009; Schulte Nordholt 2009) and a huge debt to be repaid to the Netherlands, as stipulated by the Round Table Conference negotiations in late 1949 (Gouda and Brocades Zaalberg 2002). Culturally, Indonesia was held together primarily by its national language, Indonesian Malay, which the nationalist movement had named 'Bahasa Indonesia' and declared the 'language of unity' back in 1928, but which received its real boost during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) when the speaking, teaching and publication of Dutch had been prohibited. Socially, the nation inherited from the 1945-1949 period a shared sense of revolution and change, and faith in the future (Reid 1974). But in order to understand what really held the nation together after December 1949, once independence had been finally recognized and the harsh realities of political and economic life set in, one has to look at cultural expression of the time. There, the overriding concern with 'Indonesianness' leaps to the fore. Despite various and conflicting ideological approaches about what kind of culture Indonesia should have, there was a common conviction that 'being Indonesian' was an issue of culture.

THE 1950-1965 PERIOD

The 1950-1965 time span of Indonesian history can be seen as many periods within a period, depending on the lens used, (decol-

onization; federalism to unitarism; regional conflict; constitutional democracy; political factionalism; autocratic rule; international relations; economic decline; Cold War interventions). But in one significant respect 1950-1965 is a single period – namely in the way our ideas about it have been shaped by the way it ended. It is this retrospective vision that the essays in this book focussing on cultural history set out to challenge.

The ending of the story, with all its unanswered questions, is relatively well known, and remains a sensitive topic in Indonesia over four decades later, despite the fact that since the fall in 1998 of Soekarno's deposer and successor, President Suharto, people in Indonesia are finally able to speak and write more openly about those events. On the night of 30 September-1 October 1965 in Jakarta, six generals were kidnapped and murdered by a group (comprising members of the palace guard, some army battalions and civilian communist youth) that called itself 'the 30th September Movement' and claimed its actions were to intercept a coup by a CIA-backed 'Council of Generals'. The '30th September Movement' was immediately countered by anti-communist army forces led by General Suharto who assumed command when these forces regained control of Jakarta. The coup was blamed fully on the Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia or PKI; the coup became known in Indonesia henceforth as G30S-PKI), and a violent purge followed over the following four months, with mass killings of at least half a million people as communists and leftist sympathizers.[3] A witch-hunt for anyone of perceived leftist persuasion continued over the following years, resulting in imprisonment without trial for hundreds of thousands more. Artists, cultural practitioners and intellectuals who had or were perceived to have had communist or leftist connections were also hunted, killed, imprisoned, or silenced through trauma and fear.[4]

But what if we try to look at the tensions and conflicts of the 1950-1965 period not backwards, from when they violently exploded in late 1965, but as they were at the time, or more precisely at various times over that 15-year period, when people were looking forward,

3 The literature on these events is extensive. See further (and the bibliographies therein): on the coup and counter coup, John Roosa (2006); on the killings, Robert Cribb (1990) and Greg Fealy and Katharine McGregor (2010); on the powerful mythmaking and historical blackout during Suharto's New Order, Ariel Heryanto (1999).

4 Hersi Setiawan (1995) has written about the life in prison of many of these detainees in Buru. A recent Indonesian publication that recounts the detention without trial for seven years of a Sundanese traditional singer, merely because of her performance history at Soekarno's presidential palace at Cianjur and the fact that she once sang at a public PKI event, see Nani Nurani Affandi 2010.

not backwards? Certainly, for at least the first decade, the differences, tensions and conflicts between intellectual and cultural groups can then be seen as the rigorous debate of young men (for the spokespersons were almost entirely men) jostling and testing new ideas and their own newfound positions on the stage of the new republic; such conflict was part of the fabric of the time, and had roots in the 1930s and 1940s.[5] People did not know then, of course, how the increasingly rigid and polarized positioning of ideas would explode, even if by early 1965 – with Soekarno's deteriorating health, the heat of Cold War politics, domestic jockeying for power, autocratic government, conflict over land reform, censorship, and the thorough politicization of language (as the occasional 'alphabet soup' of acronyms in this book attests) – it was clear that something had to give. From 1963, things began to get nasty. The Left was in the ascendant, and hounded those of different persuasion. Artists and cultural practitioners sought alignment (and protection) with political groups such as the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, Revival of Islamic Scholars) or the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party). Debates were no longer relatively innocent combatant exchanges of ideas between energetic young men, but became more inclined towards vicious personal vilification. And divisions and tensions were not only between broad ideological 'camps', but also within them: not only between the PKI and NU, or NU and PKI, but also within NU (Fealy and McGregor 2010), and within LEKRA (Lembaga Kesenian Rakjat, the Communist Party-affiliated Institute of People's Culture) and the PKI (Bodden, this volume). The centre could not hold.

Given the tragic events of late 1965 and the bloodbath and eruption of violence directed against communists or those perceived to be leftist sympathizers following the events of 30 September-1 October, it is not surprising that the entire 1950-1965 period generally has been seen (by Indonesian and non-Indonesians alike) in terms of a trajectory towards that tragic end point: the economy failing; the decline of constitutional democracy[6]; an increasingly autocratic leader; the crushing of regional autonomy; centralization of power; intellectual and cultural polarization between the Left and the Right, and the Cold War looming over all. The power of this picture of decline owes much to General (later President) Suharto's regime that followed (1966-1998),

5 See Hersri Setiawan's essay (2003) 'Tentang Lekra' (On Lekra) for an account of the emergence of Lekra in 1950 from cultural practice and earlier debates of the 1930s and 1940s.

6 Indeed, Herbert Feith's influential study of this period is titled 'The decline of constitutional democracy in Indonesia' (Feith 1962).

which effectively portrayed the previous period as a path to disaster to justify its own usurping of power. However, we must remember that Soekarno himself contributed to this picture. He had also portrayed the early 1950-1957 period as another path to disaster, using the failure of constitutional democracy as justification for instituting 'Guided Democracy'.

Writing on culture of the Soekarno period has also tended to focus on the way things ended up in 1965, and this picture has then been applied to the 1950s and early 1960s as a whole. Claire Holt (1967) is a stellar exception, but her book discusses art in this period as part of a much broader historical survey. Michael Bodden (2010) has recently given a fresh, more nuanced picture of the political background to leftist cultural activity of the period. Generally, however, there has been intense interest in divisions between cultural camps rather than to any connections between them, and the focus on 'culture' has been predominantly where divisions became most marked – in the field of Indonesian literature and to a lesser extent, painting.[7] This was the arena of high culture, (even though often couched in the name of 'the People') where the debate about national direction for art was most articulated. The world of popular culture during the Soekarno period, however, has largely escaped notice, except for film, where the focus has been more on divisions and ideological conflict in the field of Indonesian production, particularly in the early 1960s, rather than on broad popular consumption (Salim Said 1991; Sen 1994).

A scholarly bias towards literature and written sources, coupled with a retrospective post-1965 lens, has resulted in the portrayal of intellectual and cultural life of the whole early period of the Indonesian republic as one of polarized conflict of Left versus Right, little nuanced by the complexity of internal relationships within any 'left' or 'right', and with virtually no attention paid to other cultural movements, for instance the activities of the various Muslim cultural organizations and to their links within the international Muslim world. The conflict that erupted in 1963 between LEKRA cultural workers and the Manifes Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto) signatories has been taken as the ultimate symbol of cultural conflict, portrayed as a polarized clash between ideologies of engaged art versus 'art for art's sake' and then applied retrospectively to the entire 15-year period and to all art and artists.To begin to understand the 1950s and early 1960s, we must attempt to look at the period in its own terms, and not in retrospect from a 1965 perspective. We need

7 For literature, see Foulcher 1986, 1993; Maier 1987. On visual art, see Wright 1994; Spanjaard 1998; Agus T Dermawan and Wright 2001; Amir Siddharta 2006.

to ask new questions. How did Indonesian artists and intellectuals interrelate? How did their ideas and activities stimulate each other? How did they relate to the world outside? What was the interaction between exposure to the world and cultural developments back home? What was daily cultural life like? How did areas outside of Java or Jakarta relate to the cultural debates and divisions there? What did 'national culture' mean locally over Indonesia over this period, and how was commitment to it influenced by local events? The writers in this volume have tried to address these and other questions by seeking out fresh data and fresh subjects, and by trying to look at Indonesia's cultural history from 1950-1965 with fresh eyes and new approaches to better understand how the world and Indonesia might have looked to various Indonesian cultural actors in various places and at various times back then. In so doing, they have found the situation more complex and fluid than hitherto understood. More than differences and divisions among artists and intellectuals, or despite them (for they were, indeed, often bitter and very real, particularly in the early 1960s), they have discovered there was an overriding common commitment to the future, to the nation, to Indonesian culture, and to what that might be.

Culture is crucially important to understanding Indonesia at this time. The importance the Republic placed on culture in building the nation is shown by the fact that even in the chaotic period of 1948, when the Republic was in disarray, its territories whittled back to Aceh, parts of Sumatra and Central Java, and when internal tensions were about to erupt in the September communist uprising in Madiun, the government organized the first Cultural Congress, which was held in Magelang in August with President Soekarno, Vice President Hatta and General Sudirman all attending both the opening and closing ceremonies, and the Minister for Education, Training and Culture (Ali Sastroamidjojo) participating throughout. Yet culture has often been treated as peripheral to the 'real' business of political history.[8] This is partly because those writing specifically on culture of the period have also tended to see cultural history in narrow terms; focussing on Indonesian literature, or LEKRA, or the Cultural Manifesto debate and cultural ideologies of the early 1960s, with little attention to the overall place of culture in the nation, to the wider world of international cultural

8 For instance, neither Feith (1962) nor Anderson (1972) include the word 'culture' as the other part of the portfolio of the Ministers entrusted with it. The importance the Indonesian Republic placed on culture is reflected in the fact that it was linked with education from the very first cabinet. Ki Hadjar Dewantara was Indonesia's first Minister for Education, Training and Culture (Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Kebudayaan), from September-November 1945.

traffic, to Indonesia beyond Jakarta or Java, or to popular culture and other art forms beyond literature.

But the 1950s and early 1960s was a time when Indonesia's links with the world and its nationhood were vigorously negotiated on the wide cultural front. It was a heady time of nation building. Culture was at the very heart of relations between people, which was what nation building was most crucially about, as artists and intellectuals in the young republic reflected upon, engaged and experimented with, and argued vigorously about what was linking and dividing them and making them 'Indonesian'. And the international setting was right at the heart of thinking of the nation among other nations. The inter-relationship between Indonesia's cultural traffic abroad and the developments at home during the 1950-1965 period is what the essays in this volume together address.

POLITICAL MAPPING

The major political events of the 15 years from 1950 until the 1965 coup that culminated in the toppling of Soekarno and the elimination of the Left have been well documented (Feith 1962; Ricklefs 2001; Taufik Abdullah 2009). Commonly, the 1950-1965 period has been divided into two: 1950-1957 as the time of constitutional democracy including Indonesia's first general election in 1955; and 1957-1965 as the time of Guided Democracy, with 1957-1958 marking a watershed with serious outbreaks of regional rebellion, political crisis, more autocratic government, increased prominence of the Left in political, social and cultural life, and the nationalization of Dutch enterprise. Taking 1950 as the beginning point blurs many continuations with the 1945-1949 period, including the negotiations and conflicts that marked the staggered transition from the federal United States of Indonesia to the unitary republic by August 1950, which ensconced Soekarno as political leader and marginalized previously important leaders such as Sjahrir and Hatta (Gouda and Brocades Zaalberg 2002; Mrázek 1994). Recently, in rethinking the periodization of Indonesian historiography, the rigidity of the division of 1950-1965 into two periods has also begun to be reassessed (Vickers 2008).

It is worth recalling some of the major events and underlying currents of the 1950-1965 period, such as anti-centrist discontent and political factionalism within Indonesia, international Cold War tensions and the anti colonial struggle in Africa and Asia, all of which both support and modify the delineation of this era of Indonesia's

history into two distinct periods. Even before the December 1949 transfer of sovereignty, centrifugal tensions (political, religious and regional) were evident. In the midst of the revolution, the communist uprising in Madiun in September 1948 pitched *pemuda* against *pemuda* and shattered the image of a united front of independence fighters battling the Dutch.[9] In August 1949, just four months before the official transfer of sovereignty, the Darul Islam movement proclaimed the establishment of the Indonesian Islamic State based in West Java. (Rebels began to surrender in 1957, but the leader, Kartosuwirdjo, was not captured until 1962). In the early 1950s, rebellions became regional. In April 1950, separatists in Maluku declared the Republic of South Maluku, and in September 1953, there was rebellion in Aceh. In the same year, Kahar Muzakkar, the leader of a rebellion in South Sulawesi that had broken out in 1951, declared this rebellion to be linked to the Darul Islam movement. In December 1956, army officers took over control of civilian government in the provinces of West and North Sumatra, and called for greater regional autonomy. The call was taken up in early 1957 by further army councils established in Kalimantan, North and South Sulawesi and Maluku, and unrest in South Sulawesi escalated in March 1957 with the declaration of the Charter of Universal Struggle (Piagam Perjuangan Semesta Alam, known as Permesta). Martial law was declared. Just over one year later, in March 1958, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, PRRI) proclaimed its existence in Padang, West Sumatra, leading to a state of civil war. In 1958, the unitary archipelagic state seemed to be falling apart.

As Gusti Asnan and co-authors have discussed, these regional rebellions were not all truly separatist movements, but they were fuelled by discontent with inequitable distribution of wealth (as the national economy spiralled downwards and inflation soared), and by demand for more autonomy in controlling local resources as long-neglected local infrastructure crumbled (Gusti Asnan et al. 2006). By 1960, the military had largely won the regional battle. Now the fight for resources in the national political arena – namely for Soekarno's patronage and the power that ensued – intensified. Between 1957-1960, Soekarno increased his own power over the elected parliament. In 1957, he announced his proposal for 'Guided Democracy' which was fully implemented in 1959, a form of government based on 'mutual cooperation' and more in tune with his view of the Indonesian national character (Ricklefs 2001:309). He consolidated competing power blocks, and enforced

9 See Dharta (writing under pseudonym Jogaswara) 1949.

political cohabitation between them with his policy of 'Nasakom' – the alliance of nationalism, (*nasionalisme*), religion (*agama*) and communism (*komunisme*). In 1960, Soekarno dissolved parliament.

Events in Indonesia were played out against the international backdrop of the Cold War and decolonization in Asia and Africa. Indonesia's communist party was then the third largest in the world after the USSR and the People's Republic of China, (Ricklefs 2001:327). Indonesia, unlike Vietnam for instance, was not a communist state (the Indonesian Communist Party was one party in parliament), yet it was linked into the international network of socialism and Indonesian links to the socialist world were not the monopoly of communists or even of leftist individuals and organizations. Indonesia was a site of competition for influence between the First and Second World superpowers, the US and the USSR, and later, with the Sino-Soviet split in 1961, the USSR, PRC and US. As the first Asian nation to declare its independence at the end of World War II, Indonesia was seen in the region as the leader in the fight against imperialism. Between 1950 and 1965, five Asian and 35 new African nations emerged from previous colonies.[10] Soekarno was quick to seize leadership in this New World, hosting the first historic Asia Africa meeting in Bandung in 1955, and recognizing the potential power of a neutral third force – a Third World – that could balance the two superpowers and their allies in the Cold War. With so many new African and Asian nations now eligible for membership at the United Nations, the Afro-Asian bloc was a growing political force to be reckoned with.

Over the 1950s, Indonesia opened diplomatic missions over the world, and Soekarno made frequent state trips abroad, travelling to the socialist bloc, the United States, the People's Republic of China, Japan, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa. He was masterful at using the Cold War for his own purposes, playing one superpower off another to obtain foreign aid. It was only in early 1965, in protest at Malaysia being given a non-permanent seat in the Security Council during Indonesia's Confrontation with what Soekarno saw as a British colonial puppet state, that Indonesia withdrew from the United Nations, Indonesia finally turned its back on the US and its allies and veered more sharply to the left, away from its more neutral stance, and into closer alliance with the PRC.

10 Cambodia (1953); Laos (1954); Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco (1956); Ghana (1957); Malaya (1957) - later Malaysia (1963); Guinea (1958); Chad, Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Togo, Zaire, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Cameroon (1960); Sierra Leone, Syria (1961); (South Africa but with apartheid, not fully independent, 1961); Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda (1962); Kenya, Tanzania (1963); Singapore (1965); Malawi, Zambia (1964); Gambia (1965); Maldives (1965).

CULTURAL INTERNATIONALISM

On 18 February 1950 – less than two months after international recognition of Indonesia's independence – a group of artists (writers associated with the weekly journal, *Siasat*, all men) drew up a Testimonial of Beliefs (Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang) named *Gelanggang* after the cultural supplement of the weekly *Siasat*. It opens with the memorable sentence: 'We are the legitimate heirs to world culture, and we are furthering this culture in our own way.'[11]

There are many points to make about this Testimonial, but here I will make three. First, it is striking that the very opening words of this first statement about Indonesian culture post-December 1949 emphasize a world context. From the outset, the authors of the Testimonial see that Indonesia's national culture project is internationalist, Indonesia placing itself in the world. The declaration oozes self-confidence about the place of Indonesian culture in the world – its artists and thinkers, indeed all Indonesians (the 'we')[12] are legitimate heirs to world culture – not some bastard progeny who must fight for their rights. And Indonesian culture is clearly seen as in terms of ongoing interaction with the world – it is an inheritance that is being furthered 'in our own way'.

A second point to make about the Testimonial is the fact that a group of cultural figures felt the need to make such a declaration so early in the nation's history. The issue of culture is urgent, and it has an important role to play in the nation. (This had also been signalled by the first Indonesian Cultural Congress held in 1948). This sense of urgency and belief in the important role for culture expressed in the Gelanggang Testimonial, the first of many declarations about culture made over the 1950s and early 1960s, persists in later statements made by groups with very different ideas about what form it should take.

The third point to make concerns the people who drafted the Gelanggang Testimonial, for they went on to take different paths, some of which are traced in essays in this volume. The Gelanggang group of writers and painters had been formed in Jakarta

11 '*Kami adalah ahli waris yang sah dari kebudajaan dunia dan kebudajaan ini kami teruskan dengan cara kami sendiri.*' The English translation of this sentence is my own. The full Indonesian text is presented in Goenawan Mohamad (2002a:85-6, 2002b:203). An English translation of the full text is given in Teeuw (1986, I:127) and another in Goenawan Mohamad (2002b:202-3). The Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang was published in *Siasat/Gelanggang* 22-10-1950.

12 Goenawan Mohamad (2002a, 2002b) has also pointed out the significance of the use of the exclusive Indonesian pronoun '*kami*' ('we', not including 'you') rather than the inclusive '*kita*' (all of us, including 'you'), as indicative of the statement being addressed not to fellow Indonesians, but to the outside world.

in 1946 during the Revolution years, and in 1950 its members still shared a common vision (Goenawan Mohamad 2002b:202; Heinschke 1996; Foulcher 1993). The main architect of the text was Asrul Sani, then aged 24 and already well known as a writer and dramatist, who became a prominent filmmaker in the 1950s, and in 1962 was one of the founders of Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia (LESBUMI, the Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures), which is discussed by Choirotun Chisaan in this volume. Another member of the core Gelanggang group at this time was Sitor Situmorang, poet and journalist then also aged 24, who in 1959 founded and became head of the Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional (LKN, Institute for National Culture) that was affiliated with the PNI, which Darma Putra discusses in his essay on LKN in Bali. Three other names deserve mention, because they also recur through the 1950s (and in this book). Rivai Apin, writer and editor then aged 22, who was also a core member of the Gelanggang group, later became a prominent member of LEKRA, and from 1959-1965 served on its central committee. Basuki Resobowo, a painter and writer, who at 33 was more senior to the others in the Gelanggang group and also more on the fringe, became a communist activist and, among other things, in the early 1960s participated as set designer in LEKRA- and PKI- sponsored performances promoting communist policies such as land reform that Michael Bodden discusses in his essay. Another member of the wider Gelanggang-*Siasat* circle of writers at the time of the drafting of the Testimonial was Pramoedya Ananta Toer, only 25 in 1950 but already a well-published writer, who later in the 1950s became committed to the Left and in 1959 was elected to the executive board of LEKRA, although he was not a member of that organization (Heinschke 1996:149-51).

On Independence Day, August 17, six months after the Gelanggang Testimonial was signed, LEKRA was established and drew up its first declaration on culture, which was given the Arabic word Mukadimah (for 'preamble').[13] This declaration of 1950 (which was subsequently revised in 1955) was drafted by 15 'cultural workers' including the writer A.S. Dharta (LEKRA's first General Secretary) the painter Henk Ngantung (member of the central LEKRA Board), Njoto (who was elected to the PKI Politbureau in 1951),

13 To date, where and when the 1950 Mukadimah text was first published remains unsolved. The 1950 text is reprinted in the appendix in Foulcher (1986:209-18) but this was most likely taken from a publication from the late 1950s. The version that was published in *Zaman Baru* (no. 3 Bulan Djuni 1956) is the later revised 1955 text.

and writer Joebaar Ajoeb (general secretary of LEKRA from 1959). While primarily a statement about 'People's Culture' ('Kebudajaan Rakjat') and LEKRA's policy of revolution against feudal and imperialist culture, the declaration also stressed interaction with the world in this struggle. 'The essence of foreign cultures', it says, and 'Indonesian culture from the past' will be 'drawn on critically […] to raise the standard of the new Indonesian culture, namely the People's Democratic Culture'.[14] From the outset, Indonesian national culture was thus perceived, even with contrasting ideological approaches, in terms of international interaction.

MODELS OF MODERNITY

Over the 1950s and 1960s, as was the case with other recently decolonized societies in Asia – and would occur in African nations emerging from European colonialism – a self-conscious process of 'decolonizing the mind' was essential for Indonesia's autonomous, postcolonial identity. The reality of the new nation severely jolted the process of rethinking the place of cultural heritage, which had begun decades before. It also heralded a more gradual process of liberation from Dutch colonial – 'orientalist' – constructions of Indonesian culture(s).

Since the 1930s, debate about the future of Indonesian culture had been entangled with ideas of Western (European) technological progress. The 'Great Debate' (Holt 1967) or 'Cultural Polemic' (Achdiat K. Mihardja 1954), as it came to be called, which so engaged intellectuals over the 1930s and 1940s was basically the debate between those who saw the need to discard Indonesia's cultures 'of the past' in the move towards becoming both Indonesian and modern, and those who conversely saw Indonesia's cultures as an emblem of its indigenous identity. The choice came to be described in colonial terms of 'East' versus 'West', with 'the West' representing Europe, the future, education and technological progress, and 'the East' indigenous knowledge and non-Western identity, the past and tradition. The complication of that time (and where the debate lay) was the ambiguous position of 'the West':

14 'Kebudayaan asing akan diambil sarinya dengan cara kritis atas dasar kepentingan praktis dari Rakyat Indonesia. Demikian pula kebudayaan Indonesia kuno tidak akan dibuang seluruhnya, tetapi juga tidak akan ditelan mentah-mentah. Kebudayaan kuno akan diterima dengan kritis untuk meninggikan tingkat Kebudayaan Indonesia baru yaitu Kebudayaan demokrasi Rakyat' (Foulcher 1986:212). (Modern Indonesian spelling in Foulcher.)

while the nationalist movement was a fight against Western colonialism, many saw the same West as the future. How, then, to support locally distinctive cultural self-confidence?[15]

The situation became much more complex once Indonesia became independent. The challenge facing Indonesian artists and intellectuals in the early 1950s was rethinking what modernity meant. Els Bogaerts' essay in this volume, which traces writing of a prominent group of intellectuals writing in the weekly *Mimbar Indonesia* reveals how a group of largely Dutch-educated urban intellectuals wrestled with this challenge in the decolonization period of the early 1950s, as they began to prise apart notions of modernity and progress from colonial culture. And at the same time, as Liesbeth Dolk discusses in her essay, the Dutch cultural foundation (Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking, STICUSA) was actively wooing Indonesian artists in an effort to maintain cultural links with the Netherlands, a project which, as she describes, was destined to fail.

Over the 1950s, the question became more complicated as Indonesia's artists and intellectuals came into contact with various models of modernity, both through links with circuits abroad and through contact with each other at home. New networks and models challenged long held ideas, and the old dichotomy of East versus West became completely outdated. Socialism and capitalism offered two diametrically opposed models of technological advancement and progress, and both the socialist USSR and the capitalist United States were Western.[16] The two superpowers of the Cold War were two different models of the 'new' West. The USSR was the hub of a socialist cultural network with a hectic calendar of events; arts festivals, study tours, exhibitions, youth festivals and meetings in which Indonesia participated. The word 'youth' was everywhere. In contrast, non-socialist Europe was becoming the crusty 'old' West, the West of colonialism, a discredited model of modernity that seemed neither youthful nor modern.

From the mid-1950s, the PRC emerged as a new model of modernity that was particularly important to Indonesia, for the PRC was the new East, with the speed of its social and cultural transformation inspiring, fascinating and alarming to Indonesian artists and intellectuals, about which Hong Liu (2006) has written. The East

15 For further on the cultural debates and an excellent discussion on cultural policy over the 1950-1965 period, see Tod Jones (2005). For a discussion on art and modernity in relation to Bali, see Vickers (1996).

16 See further the discussion in Westad (2005).

was rising. Keith Foulcher's essay in this volume, which discusses the ideas of a group of artists, writers and intellectuals who represented the cultural arm of Sutan Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party) writing in the bi-monthly *Konfrontasi,* and traces their shifting interaction with the world outside, shows the crucial role of China in sharpening the new issue troubling intellectuals by around 1957, namely: whose modernity? Socialism or capitalism? The old question of 'East' or 'West' that still haunted the writers of *Mimbar Indonesia* just a few years back in 1950, was by now well gone.

The competing 'new West' was the United States, which was the source of Hollywood film and popular music that was eagerly consumed all over Indonesia. (It was only in early 1964 that the Left lobbied for a boycott on US film imports, and finally had Soekarno's ear). Soekarno himself was a great fan of Hollywood film. He and his son Guntur were taken to meet film stars like Roy Rogers when Soekarno visited the US in 1956, and Soekarno visited Hollywood again on his second visit to the US in 1961. As Tony Day cites in his essay, although Soekarno and Eisenhower had no political meeting of minds during the 1956 visit, they did converse about film.

Apart from the 'new West' and the 'new East', older established cultural circuits with which Indonesia had long interacted were also being redefined. The old cultural links in the Malay world between Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, with exchange of performance and literature, continued and expanded in the 1950s and early 1960s, as Marije Plomp notes in her essay, with Singapore and Medan now centres of production for film, music and pulp fiction. In the field of literature, Budiawan shows how Indonesia's links with the Malay Peninsula were unique in that Indonesia was the 'exporter' of culture and the source of inspiration to Malay nationalists across the Malacca Strait.

Egypt**,** still a centre for Islamic study for Indonesians as it had been for centuries, offered a different image of modernity in the 1950s and early 1960s: a Muslim socialist state under Nasser; a centre of the Pan-Arab movement; and a centre for the production of popular culture (film and music) that was exported to Indonesia. Hairus Salim tracks the journeys of three prominent Indonesian cultural figures, the film-maker Usmar Ismail, the writer Hamka and the writer Bahrum Rangkuti, and their interactions with the Muslim world of Egypt and Pakistan. Their views and impressions were published in Islamic journals in Indonesia, (including *Gema Islam* and *Pandji Masjarakat*) and this had important repercussions back home in strengthening a vision for contemporary culture

acceptable to Indonesian Muslims, which included film, music, literature and drama.

Cultural and intellectual engagement with the world was also an imaginative enterprise, particularly through translation. The importance of translators as a bridge between worlds and conduit of ideas and experiences is often overlooked. Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the vital role of translation throughout Indonesia's history (Chambert-Loir 2009). The 1950-1965 period was a particularly active one for translation. Newspapers and journals flourished in the 1950s (until the shortage of paper began to limit publication) providing a publication outlet for translations, and an arena for discussion of ideas. Maya Liem's essay shows the role of translation as a bridge as Indonesian intellectuals found models of modernity in writing from the USSR, other Western countries, and China, and acted as conduits for these ideas as translators. Liem also discusses the choices that faced translators at the time; how they came to know the languages they translated from, why they translated at all, and how they made their choices of material to translate.

THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

To be Indonesian in 1950 was to be modern. There was a sense of excitement about the 'newness' of being 'born' as a new nation and people, and the words '*baru*' (new), '*lahir*' (born/birth) and 'modern' permeate writing of the period. Being Indonesian was to become part of a larger whole, which was not entirely a Renan-like process of 'forgetting', as Goenawan Mohamad (2002b:185) has argued, but also the adoption of something more. As well as (rather than instead of) ones regional self as Javanese, Minang or Batak, one took on a new self as an Indonesian citizen that was shared with fellows from other regions. There remained the question of what to do with cultural forms that were associated with the past, and here the response varied.They could be made 'modern' merely through their adoption by the modern Indonesian nation, modified for the national stage where they were shown in juxtaposition. This was Soekarno's approach, both in the performances he sponsored at home for state events and for the national cultural missions he commissioned to promote Indonesia abroad, as Lindsay's and Durban Ardjo's essays show. In a more conservative rendition, it was also the approach of Indonesia's first minister charged with the culture portfolio (September-November 1945) Ki Hadjar

Dewantara, who famously stated that Indonesia's national culture should comprise the 'peaks of regional cultures'.[17]

However, art associated with the past and regional selves could also be modernized by being made '*progresif*' or '*revolusioner*', which was the approach of leftist cultural organizations LEKRA (and its subsidiary organizations) and LKN, as Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri, Michael Bodden and Darma Putra discuss. (Ki Hadjar Dewantara's youngest son, Bambang Sokawati Dewantara, took this different path to that of his father. He worked with LEKRA and was active in developing '*progresif*' choreography of tradition-based Javanese dance). Revolutionary messages could be injected into existing popular performance forms – from *keroncong* music to *wayang kulit* or *ludruk* (McVey 1986; Peacock 1968) where local specificity (particularly local language), far from being denied, was actively promoted.

On the other hand, performance forms adopted from Western models offered distinctively 'modern' forms of expression. The scripted Indonesian-language drama that Michael Bodden discusses with regard to LEKRA, the choral singing that was so enthusiastically adopted by the Left that Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri discusses, but which was also generally popular at the time, and the Western music that Els Bogaerts mentions as an important topic of discussion in *Mimbar Indonesia*, all offered another version of 'modern' art, in the sense of self-consciously adopting non-indigenous 'Western' forms, and thus being potentially more easily national and international.

Indonesian responses to the question of culture and modernity were reflected in different forms of artistic expression. Literature, drama, painting, sculpture and music were forms more easily 'modern' because the newness was inherent in both the form itself (non indigenous) and the language (Indonesian). LEKRA encouraged experimentation in these new forms, but, as mentioned above, was also an enthusiastic supporter of regional arts. The thread linking the two was a focus on anti-elitism and anti-'feudalism'. LEKRA's support was for art of the People, not that of the elite, or popular art forms that depicted 'feudal' values unquestionably. Its mission, apart from making art – both old and new – '*progresif*' in terms of its socialist message, was also a particularly local one within the

17 'Kebudajaan Indonesia (Nasional) ialah kebudajaan, jang kini sedangnja kita bangun dan kita susun dari segala sari-sari dan puntjak-puntjak segala kebudajaan Daerah diseluruh kepulauan Indonesia', from the report of Hadjar Dewantara's address at the first national Cultural Congress in 1948 (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1950:88). See further the discussion in Jones (2005), Chapter 2 and Yampolsky (1995).

national context: namely, to challenge the idea of Indonesian culture being 'high art', such as Ki Hadjar Dewantara's 'peaks'. LEKRA's championing of art forms of the People (forms that many considered 'lower class' troughs) and push to elevate these to the national stage was a direct challenge to that elitist approach. The injection of progressive messages should be seen as part of that process. As Oey Hai Djoen explained, 'We aimed to bring ketoprak and ludruk to the presidential palace'. They succeeded in this.[18]

Concern about a legitimate place in the modern nation for regional or traditional cultures also shaped the experiences of artists, writers and intellectuals who toured abroad in this period. This is what their curiosity was attuned to. Many performers were impressed with the USSR and PRC's support for and teaching of their 'regional' and 'classical' performance heritage. The USSR's multi-nationality, China's support for its 'classical' arts like Chinese opera (this was pre-Cultural Revolution), and particularly the art schools in both the USSR and PRC made a lasting impact on Indonesian performers who toured there (as the essays by Lindsay and Irawati Durban Ardjo show). Indonesia's first Cultural Mission to China in 1954 included the young contemporary dancers Wisnoe Wardhana and Bagong Kussudiardja from Yogyakarta, both of whom on their return wrote enthusiastic articles about China's support for traditional art forms, including Chinese opera. Impressions were not always positive, as Keith Foulcher shows of the novelist and Ramadhan KH's account of his 1957 visit to the PRC.

The physical and imaginative journeying of writer, dramatist and film-maker Usmar Ismail discussed by Hairus Salim, which took place within the national context of the search for Indonesian Islamic identity that Choirotun Chisaan outlines, provides another snapshot of international exposure to cultural modernity, and its particularly local impact. Having studied film in the United States at UCLA (1952-53), Ismail travelled to Egypt in 1959. He was deeply impressed with Egyptian films made with nationalist themes, and made inquiries about the possibility of Indonesian-Egyptian co-production. His exposure to the modern Muslim cultural force that was Egypt at this time was seminal in his formulation of a role for LESBUMI, established in 1962. But it was the local tensions within

18 Interview with Oei Hai Djoen in July 2008, former member of LEKRA secretariat. A short snippet of a performance of 'Ludruk Surobojo' at the presidential palace is shown in a newsreel held at Arsip Nasional, 'Gelora Indonesia' reel 111 (no date for film, c. mid-1950s). The 'Berita Kebudajaan' section of *Budaya* 6-5 (May 1957):268 mentions a performance of Ludruk Surabaya at Istana Negara Jakarta and Istana Bogor on 23 and 24 March 1957, which could well be the performance caught on film.

Indonesia, particularly LEKRA's role by the late 1950s in driving the discussion about ideology, politics and art, that allowed Indonesia's more conservative Muslim elements to accept 'modern' Islamic culture that they would normally oppose, such as film and drama promoted by LESBUMI and Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI, Association for Islamic Arts and Culture). It was the local tensions that galvanized them into action, bringing together various Islamic groups and cultural organizations.

All the discussion about cultural direction and the activities of various organizations, though, still needs to be seen in broader perspective of what the majority of Indonesian people were doing; what they were watching, reading, and listening to. We still have little idea about what the cultural life of most ordinary people was like in the 1950s and early 1960s. Being culturally modern was also to participate in new forms of popular entertainment. Jakarta was not yet seen as the single epitome of cosmopolitanism or source of this new entertainment. Marije Plomp's essay on Medan gives a vivid picture of cultural life in the 'capital of pulp fiction', where in the mid-1950s almost half of all publications found throughout Indonesia were printed. Malay, Indian and Hollywood films were standard fare, and Plomp notes that the remarkable level of attendance is revealed by the fact that local taxes on cinema tickets provided one third of the total municipal budget. Earnest discussions about 'national culture' in cultural journals, and debates about ideology seem very far from all this. Barbara Hatley's essay on the vibrant cultural life in Makassar in the 1950s also places the activities sponsored by the cultural organizations there against a broader backdrop of cultural life of the time, which included foreign movies, popular music and radio broadcasts.

Meanwhile, in a small town in East Java, Malang, cultural life of this period was also rich and varied. Melani Budianta's essay focuses on the activities of the Chinese population of that town, drawing heavily on her own personal experience. There was so much going on: ballet classes, *wayang orang*, *ludruk*, social clubs and activities sponsored by the cigarette companies, temple festivals, ballroom dancing, visits by international and Indonesian dance groups, Hawaiian bands, and popular drama in Mandarin or Chinese-inflected Malay. Competition between political parties and organizations in this period actually fostered cultural activity. Budianta's essay depicts a striking picture of the way different groups in the Chinese community and their activities existed side by side, and of the complexity of the mix of culture and politics, and the tensions that ensued. Cultural activities both cut across political and social differences but also marked them. Her 'social history with small

caps' shows how important – and neglected – this type of research is, to balance both dominant political perspectives and writing about culture in Indonesia that is based on activities in Jakarta and major centres, or focussed narrowly on national 'highbrow' culture.

Budianta's essay on Malang, Darma Putra's essay on LKN in Bali, Barbara Hatley's essay on Makassar and Marije Plomp's on Medan together show the need for more study that looks beyond Jakarta and Java for cultural history of this period. The conflicts that emerged between cultural factions, which have become accepted lore as 'national', then become more complicated and ambiguous. On the one hand there were crossovers that overrode ideological differences, such as social and cultural activities, clubs and family networks that linked people from different ideological camps; and on the other hand there were ideological links that overrode other differences, for instance in Bali, political ideology over-riding differences of caste, or in Java, Islamic groups uniting as a cultural front to counteract leftist and communist cultural strength. It becomes clear that ideological conflict was very much entwined with regional conflicts and differences and varied from place to place, and from time to time. Thus Darma Putra shows that in Bali, where the Muslim element did not exist, the major contest was between two groups that in Java were more closely linked, namely between the PNI's Institute of National Culture (LKN) and LEKRA. On the other hand, Barbara Hatley's essay shows that in Makassar, in the field of drama at least, LEKRA was not so much at the forefront of the cultural contest in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the main cultural rivalry was between two Muslim groups, the Muhammadiyah-linked ISBM and NU-aligned LESBUMI. Marije Plomp's essay on Medan reveals that there, the contest was more one between cosmopolitan regionalism and Jakarta, rather than LEKRA versus non Left-leaning cultural groups. In all these places – Malang, Makassar, Bali and Medan – local cultural contestations were played out within new sense of national identity that was sensed regionally.[19]

FURTHER CHALLENGES

Contributors to this volume set out to look at the 1950-1965 period afresh. Guiding principles included the agreement to seek out new

19 There are many resonances here with the complicated political expressions of regional identity of this time discussed in Gusti Asnan et al. (2006).

data, to avoid writing on subjects already relatively well covered (literature, for instance), to pay particular attention to the juxtaposition of and connections between cultural ideas and organizations and interaction between international and national activity, and to areas outside of Jakarta and Java. The writers shared data, communicated during their writing and revisions, and translated each other's papers. Inevitably, though, such an ambitious project has shortcomings. Many 'holes' became apparent as the research progressed, where new questions opened up others that could not be addressed. For instance, the picture of international cultural traffic should be complemented by an essay on the particular cultural image the USSR offered Indonesians at this time. The USSR was the hub of socialism, but it was also, somewhat contradictorily, the hub of Western 'high arts' of ballet and classical music, which many Indonesians studied there, as well as film.[20] As we proceeded, the importance of the role of Japan also became evident, particularly the links between Japanese communist-affiliated arts groups and artists and organizations in Indonesia, but this too will have to remain a subject for others to pursue.

The subject of popular culture is only touched upon in this volume, but much more needs to be done on Indonesia's production and consumption of popular culture in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly comparing different places in Indonesia. Snippets of information that emerge, such as the remarkably high level of viewing of foreign films (Indian, Malay, Egyptian, as well as American) could be pursued with more detailed study, and so too popular music, comics and pulp fiction.The role of radio is a vitally important and sadly neglected topic and crucial to an understanding of the 1950s and 1960s. The topic of radio emerges everywhere: in overseas broadcasting to Indonesia, as perhaps the single most important conduit of information between Indonesia and the outside world at this time; and in national broadcasting, as the voice broadcasting parts of Indonesia to one other. Difficulty in locating archival material on radio (broadcasts were not recorded, or recordings were not saved) limits research in this area. This is one reason why there is no essay on radio in this volume.[21] This

20 Henny Saptatia Sujai (documentary film maker and lecturer in international studies) gave a workshop presentation about Indonesian students in the USSR but for family reasons was unable to complete a written essay. However, her interviews with Indonesian alumni of Soviet art schools may yet find form as a documentary.

21 Larisa Efimova gave a presentation on Radio Moscow (where she had worked as translator) at our 2009 workshop in Leiden, in which she pointed out that in Radio Moscow's program 'the Mail Box' received an average of 100 letters per week from listeners from all over Indonesia. However, she was unable to discover further archival holdings in the timeframe of our project to write a contribution for this volume.

is one of many possible topics for future dedicated research; for instance the Indonesian-language programming of other foreign radio (Radio Beijing; Voice of America; Radio Netherlands; Radio Australia), and the cultural programming of Indonesia's national broadcaster, Radio Republik Indonesia, nationally and at its regional branches.

Visual art is also not discussed in this volume. This was a choice, because although not as consistently discussed as representative of 'culture' in the 1950s and early 1960s as literature, visual art has received more attention than the performing arts or popular culture. Again, though, as this project progressed, the need to bring visual art into the overall discussion became increasingly apparent. A next step might be to take any of the topics in this volume, and broaden them by including visual art (for example, Indonesia's delegations of visual artists and exhibitions overseas; visual art activities of the various cultural organizations, activities outside of Java, or relations between visual artists, performers, filmmakers and writers).

Scholars of Indonesian cultural history might also expect there to be in this volume more dedicated essays on LEKRA, which was undoubtedly the most prominent, important and active cultural force of the period. However, while there is a need for much more detailed research into LEKRA's activities, particularly outside of Java (Bodden (2010) has forged a path here in a recent essay on North Sumatra), the essays in this volume attempt to reclaim other organizations and activities virtually forgotten. By depicting a broader cultural picture of the period, one can then see more clearly how LEKRA was forging the way, and driving other groups to address issues of national cultural direction. It is the juxtaposition of positions, ideas and activities that this volume has set out to highlight, and in this way begin to restore a more contextual framework for discussion of any single one of them. In so doing, this project and the discussions behind the essays presented here show that there are many subjects wide open for further research. There is much that can still be done, and much that young Indonesian scholars, in particular, can achieve. The history is still, just, 'touch'able. There are still people to talk to, childhoods to be discussed, and records to be found. There is enormous potential for group research projects; for instance historians, performers and artists together investigating the social and cultural history of a place, and a defined period of time. If this volume inspires such research, even through the topics it has been unable to address, it will have achieved its goal.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Stephen Greenblatt (et al. 2010) and Frederick Cooper (2005) remind us that writing on 'cultural identity' has for the past two decades or so focussed on non-boundedness, flows, hybridity, contingency and contestedness. Apart from the desire in western academe to break down its own internal boundaries, this trend is also an aspect of wide late twentieth-century optimism about the end of the nation-state.

But the realities – harsh post 11 September 2001 realities perhaps – have shown that the world is not that simple, and that along with global flows, the nation state and other conscious identifications of boundedness have not 'melted into thin global air'. They are alive and well and in constant mutation.

In his recent book, *Cultural mobility*, Stephen Greenblatt discusses the ongoing impulses of both cultural persistence and cultural change, and most importantly, the dialectic between them. It is this dialectic that he calls cultural mobility, which, he argues, is at the heart of culture and identity, and has ever been so.

Indonesia in the 1950s and early 1960s is a vivid picture of cultural mobility, for the process of cultural formation (the dialectic at work) is transparent. What we see in 1950s Indonesia is awareness of culture as an emergent process, of, magpie-like, taking and shaping from place and time. As the Gelanggang Testimonial put it, 'We are the legitimate heirs of world culture, and we are furthering this culture in our own way.' There was an acknowledgment that there were different ways, but at the same time a common commitment to the 'Indonesian' part, to the sense of becoming in the name of nation. The sense of becoming that is an inherent part of nationalism is entirely linked to the sense of cultural fluidity.'

One of the characteristic powers of a culture', Stephen Greenblatt (2010:252) writes 'is its ability to hide the mobility that is its enabling condition'. Cultural life in Indonesia in the 1950s in particular, shows a time of promise when the future seemed full of possibilities. There was exploration and debate, and experimentations with different models of modernity and their juxtaposition. There was lively and at times rancorous discussion about change and the future, in the language of Revolution. There was exploration of different paths, yet all undertaken in the name of the nation. The mobility is not yet hidden.

The Cold War, which has been seen largely as a bi-polar negative force in Indonesian history, also facilitated and opened up access to new networks, new ideas, and new worlds. As the decade

changed, the health of Indonesia's economy plummeted, with fear of regionalism as rebellions challenged the centre, and as constitutional democracy moved towards authoritarianism, then the Cold War indeed served to cut off this openness. Ideas from a larger world became narrowed into ideologies – and ideologies narrowed to allegiances and camps. But we must not forget the 1950s. This was a time when Indonesia's cultural mobility and cosmopolitanism meant that people with very different agendas and points of view could interact with the outside world and each other in a vibrant and vigorous way. Lessons to be learnt, perhaps, for the present.

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PART 1

Cultural traffic abroad

2

Bringing the world back home
Cultural traffic in Konfrontasi, 1954-1960

Keith Foulcher

Much of the recorded cultural history of post-independence Indonesia is preserved in the array of literary and cultural journals that began to emerge as a forum for cultural debate and the publication of creative literature during the 1945-1949 revolution. After 1950, along with the rapid growth and diversification of the print media in general, these journals came to occupy a central position in the vibrant cultural life of the new Indonesian republic. The energy they gave expression to initially marked the period as a time of great promise, when the future seemed open and full of possibilities, and the idealistic dreams of the pre-war cultural nationalist debates seemed to have given way to the actual building of a new Indonesian culture. The content of the journals expressed a strong sense of common purpose and shared challenges, but for some, the assuredness and sense of purpose that they record was at the same time shadowed by a feeling that the creative spirit of the revolution had begun to wane, and that change, the active pursuit of the new, was now a pressing concern. As concern shifted towards widespread disillusionment in the climate of the mid-1950s, and the harsh realities of Indonesia's postcolonial condition began to impinge on the effective functioning of both nation and state, the political tensions emerging at the national level also came to be felt in the Indonesian cultural arena. The energetic exchange of ideas of the early independence period took on an increasingly defensive edge, as imported Cold War tensions began to shape internal lines of conflict, and limit the means through which an Indonesian culture and an Indonesian identity could be imagined and explored.

One particular version of this history can be read through the pages of *Konfrontasi*, a self-declared 'cultural political and literary journal' (*madjalah politik kebudajaan dan kesusasteraan*) that was published bi-monthly in Jakarta between 1954 and 1960. It was the voice

of those artists, writers and intellectuals who represented the cultural arm of Sutan Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party) (Legge 1988; Mrázek 1994), and in that sense, it was a continuation of the art, literature and thinking about culture that had given birth to the original Angkatan '45, the internationally-oriented, modernist and nationalist literature of the Indonesian revolution (Foulcher 1993). The link to this revolutionary heritage was expressed in the journal's title, which was intended as a call for 'confrontation' with the meaning and significance of the national revolution, as a way of getting to the roots of Indonesia's current condition.[1]

In all, *Konfrontasi* published a total of 37 issues, normally of 50-60 pages each, printed on poor quality paper in standard 'little magazine' format (14.5 cm × 21.5 cm). Apart from occasional black and white photographs, it was liberally illustrated with vignettes and full page pen and ink drawings in the modernist style of the period. Editorship remained remarkably consistent over its full seven years of publication, with the core group of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, Beb Vuyk and Hazil Tanzil listed as editors for each of the journal's 37 issues.[2] Not unlike the conditions faced by similar 'little magazines' all over the world, at that time and since, circulation figures appear to have been small, and became of particular concern in the later years of the journal's life (*K* 27:1, 28:1). Apart from publishing the journal itself, the *Konfrontasi* group also sponsored a 'study club', which at least in the early years, appears to have functioned as a lively forum for discussion, debate and cultural exchange, sometimes involving multilingual meetings with visiting artists, writers and intellectuals.[3]

1 This explanation, as well as the designation 'cultural political and literary journal', was given in the opening article to the first issue of the journal, 'Mengapa *Konfrontasi*' (Why *Konfrontasi*?), by Soedjatmoko, the prominent PSI intellectual and diplomat who was a key member of the *Konfrontasi* group. (References to items published in the journal are hereafter given in the form (*K* 1:3-12). Quotations are given in English translation, with the original Indonesian added in parentheses whenever the translation departs from the strictly literal.)

2 Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1908-1994) is mostly remembered for his role in the pre-war cultural nationalist movement, and his lifelong commitment to the cause of Western-style modernization; Beb Vuyk (1905-1991) was a Dutch Indies novelist with part Indonesian ancestry, who survived Japanese internment during the Second World War and adopted Indonesian citizenship after independence. She returned to the Netherlands in April 1958, but remained a member of the editorial board of *Konfrontasi*. Hazil Tanzil (1918-1990) was a nephew of Sutan Sjahrir and brother of Djohan Sjahroezah, who belonged to the Sjahrir circle of Dutch-educated nationalist youth in the pre-war period (see Legge 1988:70-81). The novelist Achdiat K. Mihardja (1911-2010) was briefly a part of the original editorial group, while the artist Baharudin (1908-?) served as a fourth member of the group from Issue No. 11 (March/April 1956). The final issue of the journal named as a new member of the group another long-time contributor, the writer M. Saribi Afn.

3 Meetings of the study club during these early years took place at Takdir Alisjahbana's mountain retreat at Tugu, in the Puncak Pass region of West Java (see Vuyk 1960).

Although its content and its editorial personnel clearly marked *Konfrontasi* as a PSI-oriented journal, the magazine's editors insisted right to the end that it was an 'open forum', and that publication of an article did not indicate editorial endorsement (*K* 35:1). Its contents ranged widely, and translation of essays and literature from international sources was a regular feature, with Indonesian translations often appearing not long after the publication of their foreign language originals. As a whole, *Konfrontasi* confirms the indications elsewhere in this volume that Indonesian national culture of this period was evolving through interaction with, and response to, international sources and developments. Though conscious of the journal's nationalist credentials and its postcolonial responsibilities, its editors clearly saw themselves participants in 'world culture', an international culture of modernity through which, they implicitly believed, Indonesian culture of the post-war period would acquire a distinctive national form.

STEPPING OUT, 1954-1956

Konfrontasi's first eighteen months of publication (July/August 1954-November/December 1956, Issues 1-15) were marked by a largely non-sectarian and wide-ranging concern with the shape and content of a post-colonial Indonesian national culture. Though its creative focus was literature, the journal also published articles on language, film, newspapers, the visual and performing arts, and painting. Translations, both of creative literature and essays on aspects of cultural politics and the history of ideas that had some relevance to Indonesia, drew on European, North American and Asian sources. Similarly, original articles and essays regularly attempted to introduce ideas from abroad into current Indonesian debates. In all, thinking about relations between Indonesia and the rest of the world was central to both editorial commentary and featured articles, confirming the journal's self-description as a 'cultural political', as well as 'literary' magazine. Much attention was given to the political problem of cultural engagement with the West, but the *Konfrontasi* group clearly retained the suspicion of cultural nationalism that had been a defining characteristic of the revolutionary Angkatan '45, and which continually reinforced the journal's 'internationalist' orientation.

This ambiguity towards both the West and the indigenous heritage meant that *Konfrontasi*'s thinking about culture was marked

by a tension, and an avant-gardist sense of going forward into the unknown. It encouraged an attitude of receptiveness towards the exploration of cultural options, and opened the journal to a constant, and at times noisy, flow of cultural traffic, as ideas and models were welcomed, made known and held up for examination. At the same time, a type of literature was appearing in the pages of the journal that illustrated how this cosmopolitan orientation might form the basis for creative expression in Indonesian, a cultural counterpart to the way the PSI and its followers envisaged the postcolonial Indonesian nation state. It was a literature that pursued the cultural idealism formulated in theory and practice during the revolution and later termed 'universal humanism', an aesthetic ideology founded on secularism, individualism and a commitment to the cause of political justice and equality that would enable the full realization of a common and universal humanity.[4] The unwavering commitment to this aspect of the Angkatan '45 legacy ultimately pushed *Konfrontasi* in a partisan direction, but in the journal's first phase of publication, it remained an implicit, rather than overt, statement of ideological intent and allegiance.

The confident internationalism and underlying cultural/ideological commitment that characterized the initial phase of *Konfrontasi*'s publication is encapsulated in three successive issues of the journal published in the second half of 1955, each of them reports on the monthly meetings of the journal's 'study club'. The first instalment in this series, Issue No. 7, July/August 1955, contains the text of a talk given to the *Konfrontasi* study group in May 1955 by the African-American writer Richard Wright, entitled 'American Negro Writing'. The text was published in English, but it was followed by an Indonesian 'synopsis', which goes beyond mere summary to indicate the type of reception Wright and his ideas received from the *Konfrontasi* audience. Wright was in Indonesia at this time to attend the 1955 Bandung Conference, but his visit also included a series of well-reported meetings with Indonesian writers and cultural figures in and around Jakarta. Though his visit to Indonesia, as Brian Roberts notes, belongs in the framework of American cultural diplomacy and was funded through the CIA-sponsored Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), Wright was a former communist whose political allegiances at this time were far from unambigu-

4 The term 'universal humanism' was coined in a 1951 essay by H.B. Jassin, to describe the aesthetic philosophy of the literary Angkatan '45 (Jassin 1951; reprinted in Jassin 1967). It appeared subsequently in the debates surrounding the Manifes Kebudayaan affair of 1963, although it only came into general use in the New Order period.

ously pro-American.[5] In the mid-1950s, he was living in Paris and writing under the influence of Sartrean existentialism, another politically ambiguous element in his relationship with the sponsors of his visit to Indonesia. His championing of the African-American cause, and that of oppressed peoples and nations everywhere, was expressed within a framework of left-leaning anti-communism, anti-imperialism and above all, a solidarity with the struggles of 'coloured people' against capitalist/Western/white exploitation. For the *Konfrontasi* group, this was a challenging mix of cultural and political viewpoints. On the one hand, Wright embodied the spirit of post-war cultural and literary regeneration that *Konfrontasi* wanted to encourage in independent Indonesia. At the same time, however, Wright's insistence on race relations as the fundamental and unbridgeable dividing line between 'coloured peoples' and the West was something that sat uncomfortably with the confident internationalism of the *Konfrontasi* outlook.

This difference in outlook between Wright and the *Konfrontasi* viewpoint took on a literary dimension when he moved, at the end of his lecture to the *Konfrontasi* study club, to an endorsement of the type of politically-engaged writing which, in the Indonesian context, was understood as 'socialist realism', the antithesis of 'universal humanist' aesthetics. Quoting one of his own poems, in which he speaks of the unity of 'black hands' and the 'white fists of white workers', and envisages a day when 'there shall be millions of them, on some red day in a burst of fists on a new horizon!', Wright acknowledges that many among his audience 'will be shaking heads and wondering what value there is in writing like that' (*K* 7:23-4). Nevertheless, he goes on to make an impassioned plea for relativity and contextualism in literary evaluation, arguing that 'we write only of what life gives us in the form of experience. And the[re] is a value in what we Negro writers say...'.[6] The Indonesian 'synopsis'

5 See the contribution by Tony Day to this volume. I am grateful to Brian Russell Roberts, of Brigham Young University, for information about Wright's 1955 visit to Indonesia and his complicated relationship with the CCF. The CCF itself, sometimes described as a cultural counterpart to the Marshall Plan, was formed in 1950 in Berlin to develop an anti-communist cultural offensive in the face of the expansion of Soviet communist cultural diplomacy. With covert funding support from the CIA, it became a large and well-resourced international organization that was a key player in the 'Cultural Cold War' of the 1950s and early 1960s. For comprehensive studies of its formation and international operations, see Coleman 1989; Saunders 2000; and especially Scott-Smith 2002.

6 *K* 7:24. Brian Roberts (email communication, 11-2-09) explains that Wright's *Konfrontasi* talk was a later version of an original 1940s lecture first published in French translation in Sartre's journal *Les Temps Modernes*, which reflected his then pro-communist attitudes. In Jakarta, Wright dropped a number of pro-Soviet statements in the original lecture, but 'probably felt he was in a good position to throw in at least a bit of his communist history, since [most likely] the Indonesian intelligentsia knew very well that he was [now] an anti-communist'.

that accompanied the published text of Wright's lecture met this assertion head-on, suggesting that Wright's 'political-sociological' approach to African-American writing would raise questions in the minds of some readers about the literature's real 'value'. The problem is side-stepped, however, by the suggestion that the value of a literary creation is partly determined by the work's 'honesty', its faithful mirroring of human life (*hidup sang manusia*) (*K* 7:25), a quality which is undeniably present in the examples of literature that Wright presented. In this way, and also in the final suggestion that the struggle of the 'Negro' is the 'struggle of humanity' (*perdjoangan kemanusiaan*) (*K* 7:28), Wright's defence of engaged literature is understood within *Konfrontasi*'s own cultural/ideological outlooks, and the call to action on behalf of the oppressed is recouped in terms of 'universal humanism'. This instance of cultural interaction is instructive: Wright brings the outside world to Jakarta, but Jakarta, here in the form of the *Konfrontasi* group, domesticates its concerns to locally generated outlooks, and local terms of engagement.[7]

Interestingly, the following edition of the journal was given over almost entirely to a completely different aspect of contemporary world culture, the problem of postcolonial development, through the example of contemporary India. Coming in the wake of both the Bandung conference and a recent official vice-presidential visit to India by Moh. Hatta, Issue No. 8 (September/October 1955) featured a report on another meeting of the *Konfrontasi* study club, whose speaker this time was the Indian ambassador to Indonesia, Mr Tyabji. The ambassador was accompanied by a Mr S.K. Dey, the chief of Indian Community Projects, who was in Indonesia under UN auspices to investigate the application of the Indian community development model to Indonesian conditions, and the talk took the form of a response by both men to a series of written questions on India's approach to problems of social and cultural development. It was followed by a discussion generated by spontaneous questions raised during the meeting, with the entire proceedings summarized by staff of the Indian embassy in Jakarta, and reproduced, in English, as the lead article in this issue of the journal (*K* 8:2).

7 The tensions between Wright and the *Konfrontasi* group over the issue of 'race', as well as a series of revealing portraits of the *Konfrontasi* circle and their lifestyle, can be found in Beb Vuyk's report (1960) on the group's encounter with Wright. I thank Brian Roberts for providing me with this reference, and for working with me on an English translation and commentary on Vuyk's essay that is forthcoming in *PMLA* (*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*).

The discussion ranged over problems associated with rural community development, urbanization, education and population control. But it came closest to *Konfrontasi*'s own concerns when it took up the question of India's ancient cultural heritage, and its relation to the demands of social and economic development. In a series of remarks that strike quite a new note in the way 'East' and 'West' were conventionally viewed by Indonesian nationalist intellectuals associated with the Sjahrir stream, Tyabji argued that 'it was essential to realize that the East had played a great part in laying the foundations of scientific development in the past; and that science was not alien to it in either spirit or form'. This was important, he said, because the 'political eclipse of the East in the last few centuries' had led to the erroneous belief that science 'was something totally alien to the East, and therefore required a fundamental reorientation of Eastern thought and way of life in order that the East may now receive it from the West'. Education in the newly developing states of Asia should make Asians aware of 'what their own people had contributed to the sum total of human experience and knowledge. They will then find that much of what is known as Western knowledge is as much Eastern as Religion is. This will give them a new confidence in themselves, and enable them to contribute to the creation of a world civilization – which was neither exclusively Eastern nor Western – on an equal footing with the rest of the world' (*K* 8:12).

This type of thinking about 'Eastern' knowledge was quite alien to the tradition of Indonesian thought *Konfrontasi* represented, which tended to see the 'Eastern' heritage as a 'burden' that needed to be overcome in the building of a modern nation.[8] It received added impetus elsewhere in this issue, because *Konfrontasi* No. 8 also contained the text of a long talk given to the 1955 Rangoon 'Congress for Cultural Freedom' by the Indian scholar, V.K. Gokak, translated into Indonesian by Hazil Tanzil and entitled *Pengaruh pikiran Barat atas bentuk seni dan estetika Timur* (The influence of Western thought on Eastern art forms and aesthetics).[9]

8 The editorial introduction to Tyabji's speech contains indications of this tendency, for example in the statement, 'The questions put to the speakers revolved around the problem of how a new country like India, with its burden of a centuries-old tradition (*jang mempunjai beban tradisi jang ber-puluh2 abad lamanja*), can adapt to life in this modern age' (*K* 8:2).

9 Note the prevalence of *Konfrontasi*'s CCF links, right from the early years of its operation. (Takdir Alisjahbana was himself a participant in the 1955 Rangoon conference.) The apparent absence of any overt pro-American political agenda operating through these links at this time, however, is consistent with the competing interests of those who founded the CCF in 1950 (Scott-Smith 2002:101-9), and the organization's early history. See also below, in the context of later developments.

Echoing something of Tyabji's call for Asians to recognize the universality of their own traditions, Gokak proceeds by example to show his audience both the Indian equivalents of aesthetic philosophies conventionally held to be 'Western', as well as the ways in which Western (English) literature can be understood according to the tenets of Indian aesthetics. This type of investigation was necessary, he said, to counter the Indian intellectual's alienation from his or her own traditions through the influence of Western education. He acknowledges the contributions of Marxism and humanism to the understanding of art, but he finds both wanting, 'unfinished' and 'totally unsatisfying', and reserves his ultimate acclaim for the aesthetic philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, the early twentieth-century Indian philosopher who introduced the notion of evolutionary consciousness into Hindu thought. In Sri Aurobindo, he finds the peak of modern Indian aesthetics, a form of expression that would not have been possible without Western influence, but equally unthinkable without the background of Eastern tradition (*K* 8:33).

For the *Konfrontasi* circle, members of the study group and readers of the magazine, this contact with modern Indian thinking about culture and aesthetics was potentially significant. It suggested that the proponents of modernity, in both social and cultural terms, might have taken a much greater degree of cognizance of indigenous knowledge than had ever been the case in Indonesian national, and nationalist, culture in general, and in the Sjahrir tradition of thinking about Indonesian culture in particular. But it was perhaps the multi-ethnic character of the Indonesian nation, the absence of any heritage that could be identified as a core cultural tradition, that meant that the Indian example was unable to find a fully 'Indonesian' equivalent in the eyes of these observers. For if the *Konfrontasi* viewpoint was able to 'domesticate' Richard Wright in terms of its own aesthetic ideology, it seemed to open itself to ideas from India only to find them ultimately unworkable. There are hints of this in the editorial introduction to this issue of the journal, where the editors state quite explicitly that while admiring the quality and expertise of the author, they are unable to escape the impression that Gokak's speech shows an 'excessive sense of self-satisfaction' with a culture that is essentially lacking in dynamism, a pride in an empty past that 'is symptomatic, not only in India, but also in Indonesia' (*K* 8:1). The sense of the urgency of change, of the will to begin anew, means that for *Konfrontasi*, the cultural model for a modern Indonesia cannot come from India. The lines of

cultural traffic must be kept open, to ideas and models coming from elsewhere.[10]

The final part of this remarkable glimpse into the cultural and intellectual life of Jakarta in the second half of 1955 comes in Issue No. 9, which is almost entirely devoted to another meeting of the *Konfrontasi* study group. Here we are on much more familiar ground, because the invited guest this time was the American anthropologist Claire Holt, who was visiting Indonesia for the first time in 17 years, for the research that led to her foundational study of the Indonesian arts (Holt 1967). Holt's address to the meeting is again reproduced in English, but the transcription of the following discussion between Holt and her audience includes statements by a number of participants, who variously use Indonesian, English and Dutch in their questions and comments.[11]

The content of Holt's talk, and much of the ensuing discussion, centres on the just completed 'Conference on Yogyakarta Dance', held in Yogyakarta on 10-12 November 1955. Introducing the topic, however, Holt raises a number of questions relating to the broader issue of cultural exchange and cultural orientation in the Indonesian arts of the time. For example, she notes that in their search for a synthetic 'national Indonesian style', Indonesian artists are eschewing both an inclination towards abstraction, 'so fashionable nowadays in the Western world' as well as a 'dogmatic reversion to the "golden age" of Indonesian antiquity' (*K* 9:6). This leads to the question of whether 'the pure old classical forms will survive as a cultural treasure of a nation while new forms are evolving' (*K* 9:11), a far cry from the picture of the Indian developments canvassed in the previous edition of the journal and a question much closer to

10 It is important to be aware that this rejection of the indigenous heritage has a political basis in the type of thinking represented by *Konfrontasi* and should not be seen merely as an aspect of the 'xenophilia' accusations levelled at the PSI and its followers (Feith and Castles 1970:228). In an interesting extract of a planned novel about the impossibility of friendship across the colonial divide by *Konfrontasi* editor Beb Vuyk, written in Dutch and translated into Indonesian by Achdiat K. Mihardja for publication in the same issue of *Konfrontasi* that contains the discussion of India, a young Indonesian character explains to his Dutch interlocutor that along with other Indonesians of his generation, he does not have the luxury of the European's freedom to admire 'the classics'. In Java, he says, it is attachment to the way of life embodied in classical forms like wayang that have enabled the Dutch to perpetuate the unequal relations of colonialism. 'We have freed ourselves from it with the utmost effort (*dengan segala djerih-pajah*)', he says. 'But millions of our people still live in this kind of world, and as long as they fail to let go of it, the Dutch will remain first class citizens and we will be second class, in our own homeland.' (*K* 8:39).

11 It should be noted that the use of English (and Dutch) in these three issues of the journal is not typical; in fact it is almost unique. However the multilingualism of these issues serves as a mark of *Konfrontasi*'s unself-conscious internationalism at this time. The positioning of Indonesian alongside English and Dutch assumes the equal standing of all three languages, another indication of a confident sense of Indonesia's place in world culture.

the terms of the contemporary Indonesian debates about national cultural forms. It is a question that sets the tone for much of the following tri-lingual discussion, as speakers offer both hopeful and less optimistic visions of the future of the Indonesian arts.

The picture that emerges from these three successive issues of *Konfrontasi* in the second half of 1955 illustrates the journal's role in the vibrant climate of cultural and intellectual exchange between Jakarta and the outside world at this time. The Indonesian artists, writers and intellectuals who made up the *Konfrontasi* group saw themselves at the heart of the cultural traffic of the post-war world, and spent time and energy in opening themselves to what it had to say to them.[12] Themselves multilingual and culturally diverse, the *Konfrontasi* group welcomed the presence of foreigners and foreign ideas in their midst. The modern Indonesian culture they saw themselves as building would to a large extent be the product of the interaction between 'what is really alive among us now' and all that they could discover in their cultural and intellectual engagement with the world at large.[13]

LITERARY TRANSLATION, AND THE INDONESIAN RESPONSE TO WORLD LITERATURE

Cultural and intellectual engagement with the world at large was actively pursued in the first phase of *Konfrontasi*'s existence through the business of literary translation.[14] Beginning in 1955, with the translation of two essays from T.S. Eliot's *Selected prose* of 1953, translations from world literature appeared alongside original writing in Indonesian in almost every issue of the journal. No explicit endorsement of the value of translation appeared until the very end of this period, when, in a review of an end of year symposium held by the Faculty of Literature at the University of Indonesia in 1956,

12 Think, for example, of Hazil Tanzil's effort in translating into Indonesian the long, and philosophically-dense speech by V.K. Gokak, even though he was part of an editorial board which found Gokak's ideas ultimately inimical to the culture-building enterprise in which they were engaged.

13 One is reminded here of the opening words of the Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang of 1950: 'We are the legitimate heirs to world culture, and we are furthering this culture in our own way'. As this connection suggests, the *Konfrontasi* circle was a post-war enactment of the Angkatan '45 ideals.

14 In her contribution to this volume, Maya H.T. Liem shows that translation of literature from both the socialist and capitalist worlds was a major channel for cultural traffic between Indonesia and the outside world at this time.

Hazil Tanzil remarked on the significant and welcome contribution made to Indonesian literature by recent translations from foreign sources.[15] But it is clear that translators and editors found in the translated items included in *Konfrontasi* an echo of Indonesian concerns, or models that were of relevance to aspiring Indonesian writers and the issues that preoccupied them. Whether it was the question of how a writer's individual voice might shape expression in Indonesian, or the more specific challenge of how to write about social injustice, bureaucratic ineptitude, or the struggle of ordinary people to improve the condition of their lives, translations served to widen the options available to Indonesian writers and put them in touch with international developments in creative literature of the period.

A theme which surfaces in many of the translated works is writing about 'the lives of others', observations of life lived outside the realm of the narrator's own experience. This may take the form of a writer's attempt to express political commitment through an authentic re-creation of the struggle of oppressed peoples, as in the extract from Carson McCullers's 1940 novel, *The heart is a lonely hunter*, published in Issue No. 5, March-April 1955.[16] At other times it may simply be the observation of a way of life that was once familiar but now seems to lie beyond the narrator's reach, as in the short story by Khuswant Singh, *Potret nenek* (A picture of grandmother), which was included in the special India Issue of September/October 1955.[17] The specific concern with the underdog, and the problem of 'honesty' and 'authenticity' in the representation of suffering and social injustice, sees a full Issue, No. 14, September/October 1956, devoted to a translation of Lu Xun's 'The true story of Ah Q', translated by Go Gien Tjwan and S. Soekotjo.[18] In this case, the translation is prefaced by a two-page editorial introduc-

15 The translations mentioned are George Orwell's *1984*, Igor Gouzenko's *Djatuhnya seorang dewa* (*The fall of a god*), Jean-Paul Sartre's *La putain respectueuse* (*The respectful prostitute*) (translated by Toto Sudarto Bachtiar), Albert Camus's *Caligula* (translated by Asrul Sani) and Maxim Gorky's *Ibunda* (*Mother*) (translated by Pramoedya Ananta Toer). In addition, Tanzil remarked, there had been 'dozens' (*ber-puluh2*) of translations of poetry into Indonesian in recent years (*K* 15:4).

16 The translator was Siti Nuraini, whose literary translations figured in a number of issues of *Konfrontasi* during this period. (In the 'Richard Wright' issue of 1955, for example, she published translations of two short stories by the Italian writer Joyce Lussu.) The extract which she translated from *The heart is a lonely hunter* is pp. 67-79 of the 1953 edition of the novel.

17 Unusually, the name of the translator of *Potret nenek* is not mentioned.

18 Like other literary translations of this period, the Indonesian text of 'The true story of Ah Q' ('*Riwajat kita: Ah Q*') appears to have been based on an existing translation into English or Dutch. Maya Liem (personal communication, 8-12-2009) notes that the translator Go Gien Tjwan did not know Mandarin.

tion, which makes quite explicit the relationship between the translation and its Indonesian context. First, Lu Xun is recruited into the *Konfrontasi* fold by his status as a modernizer, an opponent of an outmoded feudalism that perpetuates the suffering of the poor and oppressed; he is not a cultural nationalist, intent on making a statement of anti-Westernism. Lu Xun, the reader is informed, was deeply influenced by the West, and the examples of Western literature he translated into Chinese, but he was equally in touch with Chinese tradition. Furthermore, despite his contemporary status as a pioneer of modern Chinese literature, Lu Xun is in no way a writer in the tradition of the now officially sanctioned creed of Chinese socialist realism. Rather, he is 'a true artist, free and responsible, an upholder of the values of humanity' ('*seorang seniman tulen, bebas dan bertanggung djawab, jang mendjundjung tinggi nilai2 kemanusiaan*') (*K* 14:2). Here, literary translation can be seen as feeding directly into the ideological positionings underlying Indonesian cultural debates of the time: writing about the underdog is a common concern, but the *Konfrontasi* camp takes advantage of the example of Lu Xun to suggest that 'socialist realism' is not the only way this responsibility can be fulfilled.[19]

Examples of the original literature published by *Konfrontasi* at this time suggest that whether through translation or direct contact with original writing in foreign languages, Indonesian writers associated with the journal drew on a familiarity with world literature in their experiments with modernity, sometimes with impressively original results. Issue No. 5, March/April 1955, was given over almost entirely to the publication of two short stories and eight poems by Sitor Situmorang, a sample of the writing Sitor produced during his early-1950s appointment as Indonesian cultural attaché in Paris. Reading these poems and short stories in their original context highlights their significance, and forcefully confirms the editorial observation made in 1956 (*K* 13:1) that an Indonesian writer working abroad was no less 'Indonesian' for his physical location than any other writer whose work contributed to the indigenous literary heritage. They are the work of an Indonesian writer living and writing at the heart of European modernism, yet still wrestling with expression in the national language as a way of bringing Indonesian literature to the world, and showing what the adoption of an international literary aesthetic might mean for a distinctively modern, yet recognisably Indonesian, literary tradition

19 Interestingly, the editorial introduction to *Riwajat kita; Ah Q* describes Ah Q as 'the eternal underdog' (in English), a device which avoids the use of more ideologically explicit terminology for oppressed people (*K* 14:2).

at home.[20] The work published in *Konfrontasi* in early 1955 includes the first publication of Sitor's short story, *Ibu pergi ke sorga* (Mother goes to heaven),[21] significant in the context of this discussion because it is the most complete realization in Indonesian literature of the period of the problem of writing that positions the author between so-called 'modernity' and its 'traditional' antithesis. It does not belong to the genre of engaged writing, and it lacks the gritty realism of quasi-journalistic observation. Rather, it is a poetic evocation of the modernist trope of separation, the loss of belonging as an integral part of the modern condition, articulated with a degree of poise, control and assuredness that creates the illusion of authenticity that is the mark of a mature literary imagination.[22]

The models for the poetry and prose of Sitor's Paris period are primarily the work of mid-twentieth-century European modernists, writers of existential fiction like Sartre and Camus, and poets like Auden and Eliot. Elsewhere in the early issues of *Konfrontasi*, another more 'popular' tradition of European writing seems to have provided a different model for short fiction, the type of short story made famous in the inter-war and early post-war period by writers like Somerset Maugham and Graham Greene. In this type of writing, the narrator-as-observer speaks of meetings with quirky, out of the way characters often – as in the stories of Somerset Maugham – encountered in the bars and clubs of the late colonial world, the misfits and the heroes of now long-gone enactments of the 'human comedy' in non-European settings. No translations from this genre appear in *Konfrontasi*, but it seems to lie behind a type of writing that turns the model back on the West, reversing the observation of Westerners in the 'exotic East', for example, to tell stories of Eastern 'misfits' encountered by the narrators in the 'exotic West'. Stories played out in Western settings, like Nugroho's *Dibalik kabut menjingsing* (Behind the breaking

20 In an earlier article (Foulcher 2001) I suggested that a similar interaction between an international literary aesthetic and a nationalist consciousness lay behind the poetry written by Rivai Apin in Dutch-occupied Jakarta in 1949.

21 Kratz (1988:452) lists what appears to be an almost concurrent publication of the story in *Duta Suasana* (18.4:14-5).

22 The same judgement could be made of the selection of Sitor's 'Paris' poems published alongside the short stories. They are particularly startling in the contrast they present with the bulk of *Konfrontasi* poetry, which in general harks back to the pre-war Pujangga Baru style, rather than the modernism of the Angkatan '45. It is not discussed in this essay, as very little of it seems to bear any relation to the internationalist outlooks that characterize the rest of the journal's content. *Konfrontasi* did serve as a publication outlet for some of the earliest poetry of Ajip Rosidi (Ajip Rossidhy) and Rendra; indeed, at the age of only 16, Ajip Rosidi contributed three poems to the journal's first issue. Later issues also included some significant prose work by Ajip, including his ruminations on the 'Djakarta-Djatiwangi' divide (*K* 17:27-32). But that is a topic for a different essay.

fog), published in Issue No. 2, September/October 1954, and Basuki Gunawan's *Cafe San Francisco* in Issue No. 4, January/February 1955, should not be seen merely as the literature of a deracinated cosmopolitanism, as they may appear to the casual observer. They are more usefully viewed as ironic reworkings of a Western genre, as Indonesian writers go out into the world with the same degree of confidence European writers of the mid-twentieth century brought to their own observations of the vagaries of experience in the non-European world. These stories indicate that the reciprocal nature of the cultural traffic between Indonesia and the rest of the world at this time was imaginative as well as physical, as young Indonesian writers both grappled with the problem of 'authenticity' at home and embraced the adventure of taking modern Indonesian literature to the world. Inevitably, though, a time was coming when experimentation, irony and ambiguity would come under challenge, and a more strident assertion of ideological commitment would replace the exploration and 'culture building' of *Konfrontasi*'s early years. This later direction was implicit in *Konfrontasi*'s editorial statements and international contacts from the beginning, but the sharpening of political tensions in Indonesia after 1956 brought it more towards the surface, and changed the way the journal functioned as a channel for cultural traffic in the late 1950s.

STORM CLOUDS, 1956-1957

The years 1956 and 1957 (Issues 16-21) mark something of a transition in *Konfrontasi*'s style and content. Translations from world literature are still present, and there is still an echo of the cultural debates of the early independence period. However an increasing proportion of the content is given over to a range of original poetry and short stories that bear little relation to the international orientations present in much of the literature of the journal's early years. There is a sense of a gathering ideological storm, as a number of key articles take up the theme of anti-communism, implicitly acknowledging the growing challenge of socialist and communist thinking about the role of art and literature in social reconstruction, both in Indonesia and abroad at this time. Behind this change lies the influence of certain key developments in Indonesian politics and their impact on the pluralist character of cultural exchange and expression in the early post-independence period. *Konfrontasi*'s position in relation to these developments is clear, from both editorial commentary and articles accepted for publication.

Konfrontasi heralded the beginning of 1956 with a restatement of the anxiety expressed in Soedjatmoko's 'Mengapa *Konfrontasi*' article of the first issue in 1954. A paragraph from Soedjatmoko's article opened the editorial introduction, arguing that there was a connection between the political and cultural dimensions of Indonesia's current crisis that had to be confronted if the political life of the capital was to be brought into line with the interests of the people (*kepentingan rakjat*). As the year progressed, *Konfrontasi*'s contents began to spell out that connection, highlighting the cultural dimensions of a crisis it saw taking hold of the political life of the nation.

A sense of cultural political crisis emerges directly in the lead article of Issue No. 16, which was a reflective essay by Beb Vuyk dedicated to Mochtar Lubis, a member of the *Konfrontasi* study group who was at the time under house arrest in Jakarta (Teeuw 1967:196-7). Titled *Mawar putih* (White rose), the essay was a review of a 1952 book by Inge Scholl, which told the story of the anti-fascist 'White Rose' movement at the University of Munich in 1942 and the group's exposure of Nazi war crimes that resulted in the execution of her two siblings, Hans and Sophie Scholl, before the end of the Second World War. Nowhere in the essay is there any specific mention of Mochtar Lubis, but the inference is clear: in a climate of totalitarian control, writing can be an act of political engagement, and its effect may result in a threat to the life of the writer involved. In this case, the invocation of a relationship between Indonesian experience and the wider world may appear exaggerated, particularly in the light of what was to happen in Indonesia less than 10 years later. But the detention of Mochtar Lubis in late 1956 was the first instance in independent Indonesia of the incarceration of a writer for his political orientations and his activities as a journalist, and the chill wind that it sent through the pages of *Konfrontasi* and, no doubt, the minds of its readers, must be understood in the context of its times. It had a direct impact on the type of cultural traffic the journal sponsored, because from this time, international sources were increasingly drawn on to bolster *Konfrontasi*'s position in local issues and struggles.[23]

23 Hill (2010:50-1) notes that although Nasution later stated that it was he who initiated orders for Mochtar's arrest because of Lubis's support for the 1950s regional rebellions, Mochtar himself 'attributed his arrest to Communist influence on the President [...] He was emphatic that he was not arrested because of his relationship with military officers engaged in activities threatening the unity of the state but because of his long-standing opposition to the PKI and criticisms of the president'. It is this sense of the 'communist threat' that is reflected in developments in *Konfrontasi* following Lubis's detention. I thank Michael Bodden for drawing this issue to my attention.

At the same time, and for the first time in its history, the 'political' dimension of the journal's self-styled 'cultural political' orientation came strongly to the fore. Issue No. 17, March/April 1957, contained the text of a long address by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana to an 'All-Sumatra Conference on Traditional Law and Custom' (Kongres Adat se-Sumatra), held in Bukittinggi in March 1957. The setting appears innocuous enough, but the speech, entitled '*Perdjuangan untuk autonomi dan kedudukan adat didalamnja*' (The struggle for autonomy and the place of traditional law within it) (*K* 17:2-26), was a provocative anti-government statement that resulted in a period of city arrest for this prominent cultural figure and *Konfrontasi* editor. It traced the historical origins of centralism in Indonesia, from Hindu times through Dutch colonialism to the Japanese Occupation, arguing that even though the independence movement had no choice but to support the establishment of a unitary republic in place of the colonial state, the costs of centralized power were now becoming plain: Jakarta was exploiting the regions to an even greater extent than was the case under colonialism, and it was producing nothing in return, other than increasing corruption and luxury consumerism. In this climate, the current response of the regions was good, a healthy corrective to the failures of the centre. Disintegration of the state was a real danger in such a climate, and the speech affirms Takdir's commitment to the unitary ideal of 'one homeland, one nation and one language' (*K* 17:14). But he sees the struggle for regional autonomy as a just response to the demands of the times (*panggilan zaman*). The central government's blind pursuit of power, status and money had resulted in a perpetuation of the centralization policies of Dutch colonialism; in this climate there was no choice but to support the struggle for autonomy, not only at the provincial and district levels, but right down to the smallest units of Indonesian social life (*K* 17:24).

The sense of a threatening political climate at home probably increased the importance of international linkages for the *Konfrontasi* group. The editorial introduction to Issue No. 20 noted that one member of the editorial group was just back from the Philippines (no further details are mentioned), while two others, Beb Vuyk and Sutan Takdir, had recently attended the PEN International Conference, held in Tokyo in September 1957. Together with Anas Makruf, they had been part of a three-person delegation to the conference from the central directorate of PEN Indonesia. Subsequently, Issue No. 21, November/December 1957, contained Indonesian translations of a series of talks on the conference theme of the reciprocal influence between the literatures of East and West, given by K S Srivasa Iyengar, Dr Omar Malik, Stephen Spender, and

Joost A.M. Meerlo.[24] Each of these talks reflected the overall tendency of speakers at the conference to question the existence of the East-West dichotomy (*K* 21:1); the decision to publish them in Indonesian reflects both the long-standing Indonesian interest in 'East-West' debates, as well as *Konfrontasi*'s aversion to essentialized notions of 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures. But whereas earlier, *Konfrontasi* had tended to see 'difference' more in terms of 'tradition' and 'modernity' than an essential 'East' and 'West', by the end of 1957 both these sets of binaries were in the process of disintegration, increasingly being replaced by the more urgent – for the times – dichotomy between pro- and anti-communist.

The role of China in this development was crucial, because from the mid-1950s, the example of Chinese modernity had given the lie to both the notion of a 'static East', as well as the assumption of a 'universal' modernity.[25] Less ambiguously than the existing example of the Soviet Union, it called into question the East-West/tradition-modernity dichotomies of the earlier Indonesian debates and asked instead, 'Whose modernity, that of socialism/communism or capitalism?' Henceforward, this was the question that dominated *Konfrontasi*'s concerns. It surfaced alongside the PEN speeches questioning the validity of the East-West dichotomy in Issue No. 21, in another report on experiences outside Indonesia, a long reflection on a recent visit to China by the novelist and poet Ramadhan KH. Ramadhan visited China in September-October 1957, as part of a small delegation of Indonesian writers invited to tour China and meet with members of the official Chinese writers' organization.[26] In his report for *Konfrontasi*, he reproduced a number of conversations he and his fellow compatriots held with Chinese artists and intellectuals during their travels, ranging over questions of the nature and evaluation of literature, the material condition and social responsibilities of Chinese writers, and the question of the necessary limits to the 'freedom' and 'individualism' of writers in a socialist society. Nowhere is there any retrospective com-

24 On Stephen Spender, see below. Joost A.M. Meerlo was a Colombia University psychiatrist. I have been unable to identify Srivasa Iyengar and Omar Malik.

25 While the occasional translation from Japanese literature appeared in *Konfrontasi*, and at one point Indonesia's unfamiliarity with the work of 'good Japanese writers' was the subject of editorial commentary (*K* 25:1), Japan itself never emerged as a model of non-Western modernity in Indonesian cultural politics at this time. It is likely that the experience of Japanese 'fascism' and 'militarism' was still too recent for Japan to be seen as a model of Asian modernity, the role it sometimes played in early Indonesian nationalist debates.

26 Trisno Sumardjo 1958. As Hong Liu (1995:136-9) notes, Ramadhan was one of a small group of Indonesian intellectuals who maintained a critical stance towards China, in the face of a growing tendency among Indonesian politicians and artists at this time to see in China a model for their own vision of a future Indonesia.

mentary on these exchanges, but for the author himself and, no doubt, *Konfrontasi*'s readers, the sophistry of his Chinese hosts and the alienating nature of the theory and practice of Chinese socialist realism emerge as the underlying themes of the report. Whereas other Indonesian visitors at the time were deeply and positively influenced by what they saw of the material sufficiency of Chinese writers and the sense of purpose they enjoyed in their society,[27] Ramadhan's report concludes on a note of profound unease. The final encounter he records is a conversation with a Chinese artist who has returned home after years of living in Paris, and who has given up painting to work as an art teacher. 'Everything here must serve the political aims of the state (*politik negara*)', the former painter tells him. 'Everything, including art.' Patting his shoulder as they view the flower gardens of Nanking from the back seat of a Mercedes Benz, Ramadhan remarks, 'You've made yourself very clear (*Saudara telah bitjara amat djelas*)' (*K* 21:72). No further commentary seems necessary.

If contact with China played an important part in shaping the terms of Indonesian debates in the lead up to Guided Democracy, so too was there a much more pronounced Cold War character starting to emerge in cultural traffic between Indonesia and the West at this time. This trend can be seen in another of Hazil Tanzil's translated essays from the period, *Putus dengan komunisme* (Breaking with communism) by Howard Fast, published in *Konfrontasi* No. 19, July/August 1957. Fast was a long-time committed communist and member of the American Communist Party, a novelist and journalist for the *Daily Worker*, who in 1953 was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize but who later broke with the Communist Party after the events of 1956 in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He wrote this essay, a moving statement of the reasons that impelled him to take that decision, for the American journal of communist intellectuals, *Mainstream*, apparently not long before its Indonesian translation appeared in *Konfrontasi*.[28] In it, he looks back on the course of a life lived in the service of a considered belief in the inherent goodness and 'brotherhood' of humanity, and an understanding of 'the role of the working class in modern history'. He outlines the reasons for his decision to become part of the communist movement, reasons that grew from a conviction that it was the

27 Hong Liu (1996) shows that this was a factor in Pramoedya's positive response to China during his visits there in 1956 and 1958. However Liu's extended study (1995) makes it clear that Pramoedya was not alone in being favourably impressed by the contrast between the condition of writers in China and the circumstances faced by Indonesian writers at home.

28 No source or date for the original is given. Internal evidence suggests it was written in early 1957.

Communist Party that embodied the struggle for 'socialism, peace and democracy', and the most effective source of resistance against fascism. However all this was to come to naught in the face of the revelations contained in Krushchev's 'Secret Speech' of February 1956 detailing the crimes of Stalinism, as well as what other sources were suggesting about their perpetuation in the present-day Soviet Union and its satellites. For Fast, just as for many other left-wing intellectuals in the West at this time, these revelations were a source of great and continuing anguish. He concludes his essay with a statement of an underlying faith that no longer has a home, either in the Soviet Union or in present-day America, other than with those people of goodwill who strive to continue the legacy of the founders of American democracy, communists and non-communists who oppose injustice in all its forms.

The prominence given to this translation of Fast's essay in *Konfrontasi* in mid 1957 indicates the extent to which ideological warfare was beginning to change the character of Indonesian cultural debate at this time. Just two years earlier, when Richard Wright made his appearance in *Konfrontasi*, there was a sense that American cultural diplomacy was not the issue; what was important was holding Wright up to independent evaluation, and seeing what he could offer writers of a newly emerging literary tradition. Now, times have changed, and Fast's position as a writer takes second place to his status as a disillusioned former communist. His importance for the *Konfrontasi* group is as an ally in the marshalling of the moral and ethical arguments against communism in the climate of the second half of the 1950s. For the journal and its readers, the struggle to build a modern Indonesian culture had now become a struggle against communist influence. In the last three years of *Konfrontasi*'s existence, this would be the journal's guiding mission, determining the nature and the effect of its interaction with the world at large.

COLD WAR WARRIOR, 1958-1960

Between 1958 and 1960 (Issues 22-36/7), *Konfrontasi* effectively becomes a mouthpiece for the anti-communist bastion in international Cold War cultural politics. Translated articles and essays from international sources import anti-communist cultural texts into Indonesia, while original articles continue to articulate the resistance to the radical nationalist and anti-imperialist emphasis in national culture and politics that first began to emerge in Takdir

Alisjahbana's published speeches of 1957. Much of the creative literature of the period acquires a more strongly ideological tone; in some cases it illustrates what its ideological opponents decried as the 'loose cosmopolitanism' and 'bourgeois individualism' in Indonesian culture of the period.[29]

For the *Konfrontasi* circle, there was clearly a sense that the moral and ethical bases of public life in Indonesia at this time were approaching a state of collapse. The following Issue, No. 23 (March/April 1958), opened with the re-publication of an open letter to Jakarta's 'political leaders and the press' (*para pemimpin rakjat dan dunia persuratkabaran*) by Moh. Said, the father-figure of the Jakarta branch of Taman Siswa, the educational movement that was a revered part of the pre-war cultural nationalist movement. The letter spoke of the loss of moral values that was reflected in the current catchphrase *Siapa djudjur, hantjur dan siapa ihlas, amblas* ('Those who are honest are smashed and those who are truthful are wiped out'), and the absence of any outrage at the practice of 'anything goes' (*segala tjara boleh digunakan*) in taking on one's opponents in public life. 'For the sake of our young people, for the sake of our culture', the letter concludes, 'our public figures must revert to a way of life consistent with the moral foundations of the Indonesian nation' (*K* 23:4). Elsewhere in the same issue, international links come into play in bolstering *Konfrontasi*'s identification of the sources of Indonesia's current crisis. In the first of a series of ideologically-focussed translations by Hanzil Tanzil at this time, this issue reproduces as 'food for thought' (*bahan renungan*) the text of a speech given by the Spanish writer and historian Salvador de Madariaga on the occasion of his 70th birthday.[30] In his speech,

29 This characteristic, and its contrast with more 'engaged' imaginative representations of non-Indonesian settings, is illustrated in two short stories of this period by Achdiat K. Mihardja. In *Si ajah menjusul* (The father is following) (*K* 18:1-13), a story set in Sydney's Bondi Beach, Achdiat includes a character who argues the case for 'Eastern' ways, apparently in order to show that this type of cultural nationalism is unhelpful in the face of the need for communication with the rest of the world about the 'human condition'. However in a later story, *Buih memutih di Niagara* (White water foam in Niagara) (*K* 28:2-11), the detached observations of the international traveller seem somewhat aimless, without any sense of a relationship to an evolving Indonesian aesthetic or involvement in Indonesian concerns.

30 An introductory editorial comment notes that although the speech was first published in 1956, it is 'so important' that the editors have no hesitation in reproducing it in Indonesian translation at this time. De Madariaga was himself a member of the CCF (Coleman 1989:128-9, 215). Another prominent CCF figure whose work appeared in *Konfrontasi* at this time was the Italian writer and former communist, Ignazio Silone (Scott-Smith 2002:88-9). Silone's political satire *Panitia penjambutan* (The welcoming committee), was translated by 'T.S.B.' (Toto Sudarto Bachtiar) and published in Issue No. 25, July/August 1958, only five months after its English publication in *Encounter* magazine (see below).

de Madariaga describes three famous cases of the miscarriage of justice which he has witnessed in his lifetime. He decries the negative influence of 'the religion of nationalism' and 'the religion of communism' on humanitarian values, and concludes that the 'real freedom' of the present has been sacrificed to the interests of an 'uncertain freedom' in the future (*K* 23:43).

The editorial note accompanying this translation indicates that the original text of de Madariaga's speech appeared – presumably in French – in the monthly magazine *Preuves* (Evidence) in October 1956. This detail is important, because *Preuves* (1951-1974) was a major publishing outlet and meeting point for the anti-communist French intelligentsia during the Cold War. Before its decline after 1966, following revelations of CIA funding, it drew together both anti-communist and ex-communist intellectuals, and functioned as an expression of anti-communist solidarity across different generations and party political affiliations.[31] In the late 1950s, it was the source of a steady trickle of translated articles in *Konfrontasi*, including *Bertamu pada Pasternak* (A visit to Pasternak), Alberto Moravia's account of a visit to Pasternak following his receipt of a Nobel prize for literature that had been soundly criticized inside his own country (*K* 27:2-9). Significantly, this latter translation appeared in *Konfrontasi* within six months of its original publication in *Preuves*, suggesting that *Konfrontasi* was part of an international network – whether formal or informal – of anti-communist cultural intellectual journals at this time.[32] Another link in this chain was *Encounter*, the Anglo-American cultural and intellectual journal founded in 1953 by the poet Stephen Spender and writer Irving Kristol. Spender resigned from the editorship in 1967, also in the wake of revelations of CIA funding, but in the immediate post-war years, *Encounter* drew contributions from some of the major European and American cultural intellectuals of the time. It became known for its 'leftish' liberal agenda, as much as for its ongoing expose of the curtailment of cultural and intellectual freedoms in the Soviet

31 Achab 2000. Coleman (1989:84) refers to the 'measured liberal anti-Communist perspective' which *Preuves* injected into French debates of the 1950s and 1960s.

32 This possibility also raises the intriguing question of whether *Konfrontasi*, like other journals in the network, was in receipt of CCF/CIA funding support. This is a question I cannot answer definitively, though the available information suggests that any direct funding link is unlikely. David T. Hill (2010:73) states that an 'interim committee' of the CCF was formed in Jakarta in 1956 (see also *Kronik Kebudajaan*, *Siasat* 14-4-56; I thank Tony Day for this reference). However Hill goes on to remark that '[n]o formal CCF structure was established in Indonesia'; there was only 'a loose circle of sympathisers'. It would appear most likely that the *Konfrontasi* group was a part of that 'loose circle', an impression shared by the historian John Legge, specifically in relation to Hazil Tanzil (email communication, 4-2-2009).

Union and Eastern Europe during the Cold War period.[33] One of its contributing journalists in the late 1950s was Anthony Rhodes, and it was Rhodes who provided the text for Hazil Tanzil's next translation, a 'letter from Bucharest' originally published in January 1958 in *Forum*, an Austrian literary magazine which was yet another CCF-supported cultural journal of the period (Coleman 1989:87-8).

Rhodes's article, entitled in Indonesian translation *Tapi batubatunja tidak hanjut* (But the rocks are not swept away) (*K* 29:7-13), describes Romania as a country in which a corrupt regime has been replaced by a totalitarian socialist state, and an Orwellian arts bureaucracy has instituted a functionalist approach to creativity and the management of artists. The result, for the arts, has been the emergence of a puerile 'socialist realism', which has no basis in reality or the lived experience of Romania's people. Rhodes describes, as an example of 'political theatre', a performance dedicated to the heroism of the working class, which, once it had received 'official' approval, was then altered by the performers to take on the style of political satire, only then beginning to draw huge and approving crowds. Like Ramadhan's report on his experiences in China, this article feeds directly into Indonesian cultural political debates of the time. In the late 1950s, 'socialist realism' was indeed emerging as the subject of an Indonesian discourse, challenging the liberal humanist ideology of the Angkatan '45 and its successors. However, as I have argued elsewhere, the term was acquiring specific meanings and connotations in its Indonesian usage, meanings which, at least at this stage of their evolution, were not simply appropriations of Soviet or Chinese doctrines.[34] It might well be argued that texts like the Rhodes 'letter', along with other translations of the time, were part of a process that was imposing imported frameworks of understanding on what had up to this point been largely an indigenous Indonesian debate. In this sense, cultural traffic in *Konfrontasi* could be said to be functioning as a channel for the importation of international Cold War tensions into an already tense and confrontational climate in late 1950s Indonesia.

33 Frances Stonor Saunders (1999) remarks that '*Encounter* is rightly remembered for its unflinching scrutiny of cultural curtailment in the communist bloc. But its mitigation of McCarthyism was less clear-sighted: where the journal could see the beam in its opponent's eye, it failed to detect the plank in its own'. On *Encounter* and *Preuves*, see Scott-Smith (2002:125-32). (Intriguingly, in relation to the previous footnote, in his 1963 survey of modern Indonesian literature, Anthony H. Johns translated '*Konfrontasi*' as '*Encounter*' (Johns 1963:434). I thank Brian Roberts for pointing this out to me.)

34 See Foulcher (1986:27-57, 202-3). This discussion of Indonesian 'socialist realism' awaits modification by more recent research into LEKRA sources.

Just how tense and confrontational the situation was becoming emerges in the publication of a highly-charged personal attack on a senior Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture) figure, which appeared in Issue No. 30, May/June 1959. This article, dated 'Medan, 7 March 1959' and authored by H.A. Dharsono, is entitled, *Pidato Bakri Siregar jang amis di Solo* (Bakri Siregar's foul-smelling speech in Solo).[35] The title is arresting, and the content marks something of a departure in the journal's style, because up to this point *Konfrontasi*'s engagement in cultural political issues, even its anti-government provocations of 1957, were always framed in terms of ideological, cultural or policy debate, rather than the abusive *ad hominem* attacks that were common in the wider world of Indonesian literature at this time.[36] Moreover – and from a distance – the issue at stake itself appears somewhat trivial: in his speech to LEKRA's February 1959 National Congress in Solo, reporting on LEKRA activities in North Sumatra, Bakri Siregar had remarked that 'no meaningful cultural activity could occur in North Sumatra, without the LEKRA factor being taken into account' (*K* 30:3). The claim does indeed sound like an act of grandstanding, as part of a national LEKRA show of strength, but the outrage in Dharsono's response, as he lists the various contributions of non-LEKRA cultural organizations in North Sumatra, seems out of proportion to Siregar's alleged crime. Clearly, however, the question of 'proportion' only emerges with the benefit of hindsight. In the climate of Indonesian cultural politics in 1959, grandstanding, and the response to it, were acts of the utmost seriousness, because they were part of a much bigger struggle over the nature and direction of the Indonesian state. It was *Konfrontasi*'s role to help define that struggle along the lines of Cold War cultural politics.[37]

As 1960 dawned, it was becoming clear that *Konfrontasi*'s days were numbered. An editorial note in Issue No. 34 (January/February 1960) referred to 'technical difficulties with printing' and 'a lack

35 The author of this article, H.A. Dharsono, was a Medan author who published in national magazines and newspapers, also with the pen name Harun Arrasyhid. See further Plomp in this volume.

36 Hazil Tanzil's report on the 1956 *Symposium Sastra* at the University of Indonesia (*K* 15:2-7) contains an illustration of this atmosphere, in its description of the poisonous exchanges that took place between Balfas and Pramoedya at this symposium.

37 The extent of *Konfrontasi*'s immersion in Cold War cultural politics is perhaps epitomized by the inclusion, in a late edition of the journal (No. 35, March-August 1960), of a translated article by A. Gaev, entitled *Kesusastraan sebagai suatu sendjata dalam Perang Dingin* (Literature as a weapon in the Cold War). The article lists a series of pernicious examples of Soviet propaganda through literature, and discusses the long history of the subordination of literature to the political interests of the Communist Party in the USSR, without any suggestion that literature may have been a 'weapon' that was also wielded by the ideological enemies of communism at the time.

of editorial resources' that had caused the journal to appear late in recent months, while the foreword to the following Issue (No. 35, March/April 1960) noted that the study group had not been functioning, 'for reasons which don't need explaining to insightful readers'. The final (double) Issue, No. 36/7, May/August 1960, appeared some time in 1961, after a twelve-month delay in securing printing permission and paper supplies. As Indonesia entered the height of the revolutionary nationalism and anti-imperialism of the late Soekarno years, *Konfrontasi*, like its political mentor the PSI and numerous other organizations, had become unsustainable. Whether the subject of an officially-declared ban, or the victim of ongoing harassment and obstructionism, publications, institutions and individuals out of step with the direction of national political life found it increasingly difficult to participate in public culture and the exchange of ideas. At this point, the vision of an Indonesian national culture which had fired *Konfrontasi*'s early years no longer had a public face; the cultural and ideological struggle which came to dominate its later years had – at least temporarily – been lost.

In the short period of *Konfrontasi*'s existence, political life and cultural politics in Indonesia underwent rapid change. As a barometer of its times, the journal could be said to record what Herbert Feith famously called 'the decline of constitutional democracy in Indonesia' (Feith 1962). In the course of that 'decline', *Konfrontasi* brought home to Indonesia a window on the wide world of cultural options available to the newly emerging nations of the post-Second World War era. It embodied the confidence with which Indonesian intellectuals, artists and writers moved in international cultural circles, both in person and in their imaginations, and it illustrated their determination to channel their international experience back into the development of a postcolonial, indigenous language-based, modern Indonesian culture. But as the options narrowed, and cultural debate and practice at home became increasingly embedded in political conflict, its view of the world took on an understanding of confrontation that cast the journal's title in quite a new light. From this point, *Konfrontasi*'s international orientation lost the ecumenism of its early years and the journal's contents acquired a partisan political character. No more was it a case of domesticating the external example to Indonesian conditions; rather, the journal's international links now came to be a channel for bringing into Indonesia ideas and outlooks that re-interpreted local realities according to international cultural political polarities and terms of engagement. In this climate cultural traffic continued to flow but in a way that perhaps contributed to *Konfrontasi*'s ultimate demise, rather than enhancing the culture-building mission of its founders, editors and contributors.

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3

An entangled affair
STICUSA and Indonesia, 1948-1956

Liesbeth Dolk

Culture is never politically innocent. In retrospect, anyone with some knowledge of anti-Dutch sentiments in Indonesia after 1945 would not be surprised to learn that any official form of Dutch-Indonesian cooperation, be it cultural or otherwise, stood little chance in post-war Indonesia. Nevertheless, (economic and) cultural cooperation was included in the successive agreements made between the Dutch and Indonesian governments after 1945. Both the Linggarjati Agreement (1946) and the final agreement after the Transfer of Sovereignty at the Round Table Conference in The Hague (1949) made mention of 'cultural cooperation' between the two states.

DUTCH CULTURAL POLITICS IN INDONESIA AFTER 1945

In 1937 Sutan Sjahrir (1909-1966), writing about the Dutch colonizers, stated that 'they never ever, not even one single moment, have thought about conscious cultural politics on behalf of the people of Indonesia'.[1] After 1945 however, things were dramatically different on the Dutch side: with the proclamation of Indonesia's independence the preservation of Dutch cultural identity was now very much at stake. As a consequence, the necessity of sound cultural education – an indispensable instrument in the spreading of culture – received much attention. The view, even amongst the group of progressive Dutch (meaning those who agreed on the abolition of the colonial relationship after 1945), that the Dutch had a duty to fulfil, namely to work together with the Indonesians in order to create a new Indonesia after the western model, was still strong. 'For West-

1 '[…] *dat ze nooit en nooit, zelfs maar één moment, aan bewuste, culturele politiek voor de bevolking van Indonesia hebben gedacht*!' (Sjahrazad 1945:74).

ern culture in general and, more in particular, for Dutch culture, there lays a chance and a task in these regions'.[2] 'The spreading of Dutch culture in the East will be indispensable. It is not too late to act upon that. Not yet', writes I.J. Brugmans (1896-1992), then Professor of History at the Nood Universiteit in Jakarta, in 1946.[3]

In February 1947, some three months after the initialling of the Linggarjati Agreement, a representative of the Dutch government was sent to Indonesia for a fact-finding visit.[4]

The idea was to establish an independent cultural institution in the Netherlands, subsidized however by the Dutch government, which was to work together with a likewise independent counterpart in Indonesia, subsidized by the Indonesian government. The institutions were to work as kind of agencies and would place Holland's cultural wealth to Indonesia's disposal and vice versa. The cultural activities of both establishments would extend to education, press, radio, film, books, exchange of art, the organization of congresses and the invitation of Indonesians to Holland and Dutch people to Indonesia.

What were the chances of cultural cooperation on the whole, and of establishing both an independent institute for cultural cooperation in Holland and a counter-institute in Indonesia in that period? On being asked, Prime Minister Sjahrir, Vice-Premier Moh. Hatta (1902-1980) and Soebandrio (1914-2004), Secretary-General of the Ministry of Information, all three western-educated intellectuals, appeared to be in favour of the idea, and promised to establish such an institute in Indonesia 'at the right time'. The so-called First and Second Police Actions in July 1947 and December 1948 respectively were, to put it mildly, not very helpful in providing the 'right time', if there ever was any, for such an undertaking. In this highly polarized political situation the Republik Indonesia refused any official interaction with the Dutch.

STICUSA

Seemingly unaware of the implications of the political situation on possible cultural cooperation, or under the impression that the

2 '[…] *voor de Westerse cultuur in het algemeen en voor de Nederlandse zeer in het bijzonder in deze gewesten een kans en een taak [ligt]*' (citation in Dolk 1993:108).

3 '*Verspreiding van de Nederlandsche beschaving in den Oost zal […] onmisbaar zijn. Nog is het daarvoor niet te laat*' (citation in Dolk 1993:108).

4 The information on the early days of STICUSA is based on the articles of A. Helman en J. de Roo (1988) and G.J. Oostindie (1989).

tides would turn eventually as far as Indonesia was concerned, in 1947 the Dutch Parliament awarded subsidy to a Foundation for Cultural Co-operation between the Netherlands, Indonesia, and the Dutch colonies in the 'West' (Surinam and the Antilles).[5] The Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking, abbreviated as STICUSA, was established in Amsterdam in February 1948. Amongst the 16 members of the Board – the majority holding an academic title – was Prof J.H.A. Logemann (1892-1969), chairman and former Minister for Overseas Affairs. Most members had a good knowledge of 'Indies affairs' and almost none of the two other regions.

STICUSA's aim was roughly and rather vaguely to come, on a reciprocal basis, to 'a harmonic development in the democratic sense in the four regions'.[6] In order to reach this aim and to avoid the risk of a one-way-traffic, STICUSA would support the establishment of autonomous counterparts overseas. Moreover it would stimulate knowledge of and contact with Western culture, specifically in its Dutch manifestations, in Indonesia, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. At the same time STICUSA would stimulate knowledge of and contact with the cultures of Indonesia, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles in Holland.

In Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles counterparts of STICUSA were indeed established in 1948-1949. Indonesia was a different matter. For STICUSA it was crucial that cultural exchange would take place between independent foundations. After two police actions the Republik however once again feared the old colonial mentality: Dutch cultural penetration as a political manoeuvre.

OSCAR MOHR IN JAKARTA

In the middle of this political turmoil, the Dutch decided to send a local representative of STICUSA-Amsterdam to Jakarta in January 1949.[7] His task was to temporarily establish an 'outpost' in Indonesia in order to try and persuade the Indonesian side to establish an independent foundation under Indonesian leadership in the Indo-

5 It was Prime-Minister L.J.M. Beel (1902-1977) of the Netherlands who insisted that Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles (the 'West-Indies') were included in the program. Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles were Dutch colonies until 1954, when they became autonomous partners within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

6 '[…] om met een beroep op het gehele vermogen van Nederland en op basis van wederkerigheid te komen tot een harmonische ontwikkeling in democratische zin tussen de vier gebieden'. See Helman and De Roo 1988; Oostindie 1989.

7 For the information on Oscar Mohr see also Dolk 1996:130-42.

nesian capital. His name was Oscar Mohr, a cosmopolitan, born in 1907 in St Petersburg from a Russian mother and a Dutch father. Thirteen years and one revolution later, his family returned to the Netherlands where Mohr studied Mining Engineering at the Technical University in Delft. Before the war he was a journalist with *The Times* and *The London Times*. In 1942 he was arrested because of his activities for the resistance movement and deported to camps in Holland and Germany. After the war he worked for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1948 he was a member of the Dutch delegation to the Security Council in Paris. Mohr was an energetic, inspiring gentleman with almost unlimited interests and with knowledge of Slavic and Classic languages, science, art, music and politics. Above all, he was a man without a colonial past. His personal challenge: how to create a genuine understanding between people who were involved in what he formulated as a 'gigantic traffic accident', and how to find ways for them to socialize with each other as sensible human beings afterwards? He defined the situation in Indonesia as a 'profound human problem': how should East and West get along with each other?

'We can very well try to get rid of each other', he stated in one of his speeches,

> We can put an end to this ambivalent relationship with all its complications and irritations. It must be possible to come to a correct indifference as is common amongst sensible human beings. Then we can do the best of businesses, and then we have the least arguments. Then we have peace as there exists between Iceland and Paraguay.[8]

For Mohr this was no real option:

> Once we will all have to learn to co-exist with each other on this one planet, whether we like it or not. We have got to like it. There is no alternative.[9]

8 Address Oscar Mohr on the occasion of the departure to Europe of Asrul Sani and Ramadhan Kartamihardja on 11 March 1952. The Dutch original reads: 'We kunnen proberen helemaal van elkaar af te komen, eens en voorgoed een einde te maken aan de ambivalente verhouding met al haar complicaties en ergernissen. Het moet mogelijk zijn tot een correcte onverschilligheid te komen zoals dat gebruikelijk is onder verstandige mensen. Dan doen we de beste zaken, dan hebben we de minste ruzie. Dan hebben we de vrede die heerst tussen Ijsland en Paraguay' (collection Daria Mohr).

9 'Eens zullen we het allemaal moeten leren om met elkaar te leven op één planeet, of we het willen of niet. *We have got to like it.* Er zit niets anders op'.

How to create a genuine understanding amongst groups of people full of sentiments and hard feelings? Mohr's answer to this question, completely within STICUSA-guidelines, but with a far more cosmopolitan, universal outlook, was: through contact via the peaks of both cultures, and, from the Dutch side: by keeping open a pure channel – that is without any political or economic ulterior motives – to the European world, by making sure that the best products of European culture are accessible in Indonesia. Het Stichtingshuis on Jalan Gadjah Mada no. 13 was to become a spiritual centre and meeting place for Dutch and Indonesians alike.

Het Stichtingshuis voor Culturele Samenwerking, Jl. Gadjah Mada no. 13, Jakarta. (*STICUSA Jaarverslag* 1953.)

His marriage to Daisy Arnold, an Indo-European lady from a planter's family in the Prianger, brought him into contact with the poet G.J. ('Han') Resink (1911-1997), the painter Ries Mulder (1909-1973), who initiated the I.T.B. Fine Art Academy in Bandung in 1947,[10] and Sam Koperberg (1888-1958) a confidant of Soekarno. Through his charismatic personality, his energy and above all his integrity, Mohr succeeded in attracting (young) artists to his cultural centre like Amir Pasaribu (1915-2010), Baharuddin Marasutan (1908-2005), who became one of Mohr's employees, Hendra Goenawan (1918-1983), Mochtar Apin (1923-1994) and Soedjojono (1913-1986) and writers/poets like Rivai Apin (1927-1995), Bahrum Rangkuti (1919-1977), M. Balfas (1925-1975), M.R. Dajoh (1909-1975), H.B. Jassin (1917-2000), Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925-2006), Toto Sudarto Bachtiar, employee (1929-2007) and Sitor Situmorang (1924). Other intellectuals like Sutan Sjahrir, Roeslan Abdoelgani (1914-2005), Haji Agus Salim (1884-1954), Moh. Said Reksohadiprodjo (of Taman Siswa) (1917-1979), Moh. Roem (1908-1983) and Mohr's personal friend Moh. Sjafei (1897-1969), Minister of Education in the Second Sjahrir Cabinet, come to meet Mohr in Het Stichtingshuis. Some of them become regular visitors of the cultural evenings, the exhibitions and the library, 'not *because*, but *despite* the fact that we are Dutch and therefore compromising'.[11]

Through his college days in Delft Mohr befriended Poeroebojo, brother of the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengku Buwono IX, which made him a welcome guest in the court-capital. He even became friends with Colonel Gatot Soebroto, whom he described as 'a war-horse, with the looks of a cheerful Italian bandit'. At President Soekarno's home Mohr had discussions of, as he states, a 'remarkable frankness'. But Soekarno is not in a position to visit Het Stichtingshuis himself, however curious he might have been: 'It would be unpleasant for me as well as for you, Mr. Mohr, if Parliament would start asking questions'. Mohr gave the impression of having succeeded in establishing a free communication with 'really important people here'. In 1951 he mentioned his 'untroubled friendship' with the Indonesian intellectuals visiting his centre (Dolk 1996:135-6).

10 Ries Mulder was a teacher at the ITB-Fine Art Academy from 1948-1958. See also Spanjaard 2003:111-9.

11 Letter Oscar Mohr to H.J. de Marez Oyens, Yogya, Easter Sunday 1951. Collection Daria Mohr.

In the garden of Het Stichtingshuis, Jakarta, around 1950. 1st row, 3rd from left: Daisy Arnold. 4th from left: Oscar Mohr. 2nd row, 4th from right: Willem Mooijman. (Collection Willem Mooijman, Velp)

DICHOTOMY

At this point it is important to note the dichotomy existing amongst groups of Indonesian intellectuals before the Transfer of Sovereignty in 1949.[12] Before the Round Table Conference, one current of feeling considered association and dialogue with the Dutch as an absolute taboo as long as the Netherlands formally refused to acknowledge Indonesia as an independent Republic. These Indonesians had for the greater part moved to Yogyakarta, heart of Republican territory. In Jakarta another group of Indonesian intellectuals had settled: people who were economically bound to Jakarta or who were directly or indirectly involved in the political negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands, and Indonesian writers and critics, who were all Republican no doubt, but who did not principally exclude contact with the Dutch side. It was mainly this group of intellectuals that was prepared to attend the activities in Het Stichtingshuis.[13]

12 See also Dolk 1993:99-149.

13 The majority of Indonesian writers and critics of this group (the Angkatan '45), was gathered around the magazine *Siasat* (1947-1961) with its cultural supplement *Gelanggang*, and the digest *Gema* (1948-1950). Contacts existed also with the Dutch – Jakarta-based – cultural magazine *Orientatie* (1947-1954) (Dolk 1993:156-7).

Het Stichtingshuis, around 1950-1951. From left to right: Baharuddin, Asrul Sani and Amir Pasaribu. (Collection Willem Mooijman, Velp)

For all Indonesians concerned, however, every Dutchman, even Oscar Mohr, was fundamentally regarded as an exponent of the colonial system. The good personal contacts with Dutch intellectuals, which definitely existed, did not dispel the emotionally charged Indonesian views about these contacts. To think that the Indonesian government under the given political situation could have been persuaded to formally establish a Foundation for Cultural Co-operation with the Netherlands was naïve and unrealistic. The Indonesian government had never asked for such a cooperation, and had probably even, albeit in a *halus* (refined) way, already refused to do so ('at the right time').

Even after the Transfer of Sovereignty, when Indonesians felt freer to manoeuvre, Mohr recognized the unrealistic standpoint of STICUSA-Amsterdam and seems never to have discussed the establishment of a branch under Indonesian leadership with an Indonesian counterpart any further. This profound difference in understanding of what was feasible under the given circumstances was not the first point of controversy between the STICUSA Head office in Amsterdam and its representative in Jakarta. Mohr became extremely annoyed with the attitude of the STICUSA Board, whom he accused of paternalism and meddling. He found the members of the Board pedantic and indecent people without the slightest idea of how delicate his mission was. 'Every day it feels like balancing on a tightrope', he wrote in one of his letters.

By the end of 1951, after three years of hard work, his contract with Sticusa expired. Mohr decided to return to Holland, because he was tired, but above all because he could not stand any longer to represent the individuals in charge of STICUSA in Amsterdam. He died in Jakarta, very suddenly, in May 1952, one month before his planned departure for Holland. The journalist and writer Anton Koolhaas (1912-1992), a far less charismatic personality with hardly any knowledge of Indonesia, was appointed as his successor. Although Koolhaas did not feel at home in Indonesia, he represented STICUSA until 1954 when the relations between Holland and Indonesia deteriorated even further because of the New-Guinea affair. In the Netherlands itself, the parliament and press begin to express critical remarks about money (some two million guilders a year) reportedly spent 'ineffectively' in a country that regarded STICUSA as an unwelcome remnant of the colonial past. STICUSA as a foundation including Indonesia was eventually abolished formally in January 1956. A 'new' STICUSA arose, restricting its field of activity entirely to the 'West-Indies'.

JAARBOEKEN

One of the ways in which STICUSA tried to implement the formulated aims was through its publications. The *STICUSA Jaarboeken* (STICUSA Yearbooks) (Amsterdam, 1950-1954, five volumes) were presented as a gift to successful candidates of final examinations at secondary schools in the Netherlands (17.000 copies in 1952) and were therefore fully oriented towards informing youngsters in Holland on Indonesia, and towards stimulating 'cultural cooperation between you, the Indonesians and the people from the West-Indies'. Professor Logemann, STICUSA's chairman, wrote the introduction to the first volume in 1950. The focus in his foreword is specifically on the spreading of Dutch – not European – culture in 'those young nations'. 'Our Dutch culture is a world culture', writes Logemann. It must have been this sole focus on the achievements of Dutch culture, presented as Indonesia's basic 'outfit' for their new freedom, which, according to Rob Nieuwenhuys (1908-1999), chief editor of the Jakarta-based journal *Oriëntatie* (1947-1954),[14] caused a stir among Indonesian intellectuals. 'Oscar Mohr has refused to distribute the *Jaarboek 1950* in Indonesia, and very rightly so', Nieuwenhuys wrote in a letter to G.J. Geers, Professor of Span-

14 For information on *Oriëntatie*, see Dolk 1993:150-76.

ish in Groningen, the Netherlands, 'It is absolutely infuriating!'[15] The writer and journalist Beb Vuyk (1905-1991) in her review of this *Jaarboek* in the Jakarta newspaper *Indonesia Raya,* stated that STICUSA-Amsterdam 'does not really understand the political and cultural atmosphere in Indonesia, which is also the reason why they did not choose the right people'. She draws the sharp conclusion,

> that three quarters of the contributions on Indonesia are written by people who in fact better should have kept their mouths shut about Indonesia, or by people who should have been replaced by others.[16]

In the successive volumes – the first two for the greater part filled with articles on Indonesian issues – we find contributions from, on the Dutch side, mainly academics in the field of Indonesian literature, language, and law, like Dr Hans Teeuw, Prof C. Hooykaas, and Prof C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuyze. On the Indonesian side there are articles from Hurustiati Soebandrio (studying in the Netherlands at that time), Alisjah Arbi (a sister of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, journalist of *Warta Indonesia* and staying in the Netherlands at the invitation of STICUSA from 1951) and Takdir Alisjahbana, and translated literary work of Chairil Anwar, Siti Nuraini, Asrul Sani, Rivai Apin and Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

ACTIVITIES

Interesting sources of information on the nature and scope of STICUSA activities in Holland as well as in Indonesia are the *STICUSA Jaarverslagen* (Annual Reports) 1952-1955.[17] The activities in Jakarta (and Makassar)[18] extend to literature, music, film, exhibitions, press and radio. To mention only a few of the exhibitions and activities organized by STICUSA in 1952-1955: 'Westeuropean painting'; 'Ceramic art in Holland and Scandinavia'; 'Graphic Art'; 'History of European Theatre'; 'De gedekte tafel' ('The set table') – on European taste in table setting and how this taste had come into

15 Rob Nieuwenhuys to Prof Geers, Batavia, 7-4-1951 (Collection Rob Nieuwenhuys).

16 Beb Vuyk (1951). The original Indonesian reads: […] tidak mengetahui betul suasana politik dan kebudajaan di Indonesia, jang mendjadi sebab pula mengapa mereka memilih orang2 jang tidak tepat . […] bahwa tiga perempat dari sumbangan jang mengenai Indonesia ditulis oleh orang2 jang sebenarnja lebih baik menutup mulutnja tentang Indonesia, atau ditulis oleh orang2 jang lebih baik digantikan oleh orang lain.

17 From the years 1949-1952 and 1956 no annual reports have been found so far.

18 At one point Dr C.J.W. van de Wetering was appointed in Makassar as STICUSA-representative.

being – (10,000 visitors in three and half days); commemorations of Henriette Roland-Holst, Multatuli, Vincent van Gogh, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann; piano and violin concerts with Dutch and Indonesian musicians; opera concerts (record-playing) like *Porgy and Bess*, in the garden of Het Stichtingshuis; the broadcasting of Bach's *Matthäus Passion* on Radio Republik Indonesia on Good Friday; evenings on Danish film, 'the Swiss book and journal', 'the Austrian writer and poet Hugo von Hoffmanstal'; 'The influence of European architects on American architecture'; 'Modern trends in Philosophy' (*STICUSA Jaarverslagen* 1952-1955).

In 1952 STICUSA handed over to the Indonesian government an extensive Library of Political and Social History, compiled by the Dutch essayist Arthur Lehning.[19] STICUSA's own library and reading room on Jalan Gadjah Mada enjoyed, according to its annual reports, growing attention from Indonesian readers over the years.[20] Het Stichtingshuis owned an extensive collection of classical records and organized record-concerts (Bach, Mozart) on a weekly basis in the capital.

'Our film collection', Willem Mooijman (1926), one of Mohr's closest co-workers, states,

> consisted of two parts. Films from the collection of the Dutch Educational Movies (Nederlandse Onderwijsfilm): *Herring fishing on the North Sea*, that sort of thing. No use whatsoever, except when Kementerian Penerangan asked us if we could provide films they could show to the desa-people as an 'appetizer' for the educational films they really wanted them to watch on big screens in the village. STICUSA-Amsterdam had asked us specifically to register how many visitors attended our film showings for their annual reports. For us the request from Penerangan was a perfect opportunity to satisfy the people in Amsterdam: the officials of Penerangan filled in our forms with place, date and number of visitors. We received them back with wonderful numbers: 1000, 2000 visitors, more than enough! They were very happy in Amsterdam and for a while we did not have to react to their proposals for stamp-exhibitions or other 'crowd-pullers' to be organized at Gadjah Mada no.13. The other films in our collection were the more artistic films: Bert Haanstra, the experiments of Dali and Bunuel, Joris Ivens. We at STICUSA-Jakarta were more interested in *who* saw those movies, rather than in *how many*.[21]

19 An interesting account of the realization and handing over of this Library is to be found in Hunink 1984.

20 *Jaarverslag* 1954 makes mention of a monthly average of 1400 visitors and the lending of some 22,000, mainly Dutch and English, but also German, French and Indonesian books in 1953.

21 Willem Mooijman, personal communication, 1996.

Public performance of STICUSA films in a *desa* near Yogyakarta. (*STICUSA Jaarverslag* 1953)

The *STICUSA Jaarverslag* 1953 makes mention of the arrival of a fully equipped film car for tours to isolated outposts on Java, and of the *Boekentrein* ('Book train'), also equipped with a film cabin.

Exhibiting original European paintings in Indonesia met with difficulties in the field of security. From the Indonesian side, painters from Yogyakarta like Soedjojono argued in favour of a big exhibition of European/French painting: Picasso, Braque, Matisse. Mooijman:

> Sam Koperberg, confidant of Soekarno, would approach the President about this matter. Special military security was clearly needed on the train transporting the paintings to several places in the Archipelago. But Soekarno had no affinity with the idea and with modern art in general – 'why not just portray reality?' – and refused to support the plan. Soedjojono and other painters from Yogyakarta at that point undertook the journey from Yogya to Jakarta on their motorbikes in order to try and persuade Soekarno. They did not succeed, but it shows that these painters, the majority of whom were communists, were not opposed to STICUSA, or to be more specific: to what Oscar Mohr made of it.[22]

22 Willem Mooijman, personal communication, 1996.

A STICUSA exhibition on 'World literature in Indonesian translation' was held in 1956 for which H.B. Jassin compiled the accompanying catalogue.[23]

From the STICUSA activities in the Netherlands the meeting in 1950 of Dutch and Indonesian artists in Amsterdam is worth mentioning. The get-together intended to create 'mutual understanding of cultural values in both countries'. Participating in this meeting were, amongst others Sitor Situmorang, the composer B. Sitompoel, and the artist Serdjana Kerton. Three years later, in 1953, STICUSA-Amsterdam organized a symposium on Modern Indonesian Literature, meant as a 'discussion between friends'. Some hundred Dutch and Indonesians attended this event. Haji Agus Salim, on his way to Britain for the coronation ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II and a speaker at the Symposium, was present, as was Soewarsih Djojopoespito, Asrul Sani (speaker), St. Takdir Alisjahbana (speaker), Sam Udin, speaker (from Geneva), Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Aoh Kartahadimadja, Barus Siregar, Hazil Tanzil, Amal Hamzah (cultural attaché to Germany in Bonn), Siti Nuraini, Joke Moeljono, student at the University of Amsterdam, M. Rustandi Kartakusuma and from the Dutch side: writers and academics like Adriaan Morrien, Ed Hoornik, Alfred Kosmann, N.A. Donkersloot, Han Resink, Hans Teeuw (speaker), Annie and Jan Romein Verschoor, Wim Wertheim, the journalist Albert Besnard and translator Dolf Verspoor.[24]

VERTAALBUREAU

STICUSA-Amsterdam had its own translation department, the 'Vertaalbureau' which selected and translated articles from the Dutch press and had them sent to, amongst others, H.B. Jassin in Jakarta for publication in Indonesian magazines like *Zenith* and *Mimbar Indonesia*. The Vertaalbureau also translated children's books and catalogues. Another activity of this department was the selection, translation and voicing over of Dutch film texts for Indonesia. Translators and correctors for STICUSA-Amsterdam were amongst others the writers Sitor Situmorang, Asrul Sani, Ramadhan K.H., M. Balfas and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the journalist and writer of film scenario, Gaius Siagian, and Barus Siregar, co-worker of

23 H.B. Jassin 1956. See also Maya H.T. Liem in this volume.

24 Information from several Dutch newspapers, June 1953. Collection Pusat Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin, Jakarta.

the publisher Pembangunan in Jakarta. They stayed, in turns, for one or two years in the Netherlands as 'guests' of STICUSA-Amsterdam.[25] Most of them took this opportunity to travel to other European countries.

Apart from the *Jaarboeken* en *Jaarverslagen* STICUSA published two magazines, the Dutch language digest *Cultureel Nieuws Indonesië* (1950-1955) (2000 copies), printed in Amsterdam, and its Indonesian counterpart *Menara* (1953-1956), printed in Jakarta. Browsing through the pages of *Cultureel Nieuws Indonesië* and *Menara* one can draw the conclusion that both digests were useful contemporary sources of information on both Indonesian and Dutch/European modern cultural life. CNI (45 issues) informs the Dutch readers extensively on the Indonesian Cultural Congresses of 1951 and 1954 in Bandung and Solo respectively. The special issues on Indonesian Publishing (1952), Press (1953) and Film (1955), to mention only a few, provide interesting overviews from Indonesian-language sources that were not easily available to a Dutch readership at the time. *Menara* (21 issues) tends to focus more on Dutch/European literature rather than culture: its numbers contain works of Edgar Allan Poe, Dylan Thomas, Lorca, Baudelaire, Marsman, A. Roland Holst, M. Nijhoff, as well as articles on French, German, Russian and American literature, translated from Dutch language sources.

Selection and translation of the articles was also a task of the Vertaalbureau in Amsterdam. In Jakarta *Menara*, meant as a '"*djendela*" *Belanda jang diarahkan ke Eropah*' (Dutch window to Europe), was edited by Sitor Situmorang, Toto Sudarto Bachtiar and Ramadhan K.H. Articles in *Menara* were in Dutch and Indonesian (translated by Toto Sudarto Bachtiar, Trisno Sumardjo, Boejoeng Saleh and Ramadhan K.H.), but from the end of 1955 in Indonesian only.[26]

ENTANGLED

STICUSA and Indonesia: an entangled affair indeed, determined by politics, policies and conflicting interests. STICUSA-Amsterdam was led by academics from the older generation, hardly able to think outside a paternalistic framework. Its chairman, Prof Loge-

25 Another 'guest' of STICUSA was Soewarsih Djojopoespito in 1953. The *Jaarverslagen* contain the following numbers of Indonesian guests (writers, journalists, musicians, painters) in the Netherlands: 1952:13; 1953:28; 1954:37; 1955:35.

26 Particularly interesting is *Menara*'s last issue in 1956, again in both Dutch and Indonesian. *Tana-rendah dan awan/Laag-land en wolken*, an anthology of new Dutch poetry, contains the personal preference of its editor, Asrul Sani.

mann, before the war a prominent member of the 'progressive' Stuw-group in Batavia, in 1945 as Minister of Overseas Affairs had refused to negotiate with the 'collaborator' Soekarno and had declared in Parliament these negotiations to be 'unworthy and fruitless'. Logemann's statement, typical for the atmosphere – even in 'progressive' circles – in the Netherlands at the time, did not make him the most suitable chairman for STICUSA from an Indonesian point of view. The paternalistic attitude and the fact that STICUSA-Jakarta was dependent on Dutch policymakers in Amsterdam who did not have a clue about what was really going on in Indonesia after 1948, made implementation of STICUSA guidelines in Jakarta a delicate undertaking. On an official level the Indonesian government was not prepared to cooperate. On a more personal (or even emotional) level, the western-educated Indonesians were very well inclined to stay in contact with Dutch language and culture or to get in touch with European culture via a '*djendela Belanda*'. For many Indonesian intellectuals, leaving aside for a moment the vernacular they might have spoken at home, Dutch was their first language; Indonesian came only later. Het Stichtingshuis was looked upon with a mixture of political scepticism and personal affinity. STICUSA representative Oscar Mohr succeeded in elevating the narrow-minded policy of STICUSA-Amsterdam to a more universal, cosmopolitan level just by being himself.[27]

Indonesian 'guests' of STICUSA in Holland were sometimes criticized by their fellow-artists in Indonesia for accepting STICUSA-funded travel to Holland in the first place. Sitor Situmorang explained:

> Before the Round Table Conference going to Holland at the invitation of STICUSA was an absolute taboo for me. But in 1950, after the Transfer of Sovereignty, I felt completely free to make this choice.[28]

Although the laidback contact with 'normal' Dutch people in daily life came as a relief to some,[29] others were not happy in Holland. Pramoedya left for the Netherlands in June 1953, 'perhaps intending to escape the gloomy scene of Indonesia and look for inspiration

27 His colleague in Celebes was less successful: guerrillas reportedly abducted STICUSA-representative Mr. van de Wetering from his home in Makassar in 1954 and nothing was heard of this gentleman ever since. *Jaarverslag STICUSA* 1953, 1954 and 1955.

28 Sitor Situmorang, personal communication, 1988.

29 As Alisjah Arbi (1952:15) formulates: '*Nederlanders in hun eigen land te zien, dat is de revolutie in de gedachte van iedere Indonesier*'.

from the outside world' (Liu 1996:122) but did not like his stay at all, and left six months after his arrival. The lack of sufficient financial support to enable him to live and travel as he wished, seems to have been one of the main reasons for this early departure (Liu 1996:122, note 10). In an interview in *Kompas* shortly after his return to Indonesia he labelled STICUSA as a '"colonial brain trust" aiming at importing Western culture to Indonesia'.[30] Ramadhan K.H. (1927-2006) in a letter to H.B. Jassin in 1953 wrote how *djengkel* (irritated) he often felt as a guest of STICUSA because there is so much quarrelling about financial matters. 'We are often in conflict here'.[31] He showed distrust towards his own government and towards the STICUSA representative Anton Koolhaas in Jakarta. The latter wrote in 1952 to the head office in Amsterdam that through talks with the Indonesian Minister of Health, Leimena, he had been informed that in spite of the New Guinea-debacle there was a growing demand for Dutch expertise in Indonesia. Ramadhan K.H.:

> Through Koolhaas's letter to the STICUSA Head office (a letter I have stolen from the stencil-room) we are informed little by little in which direction STICUSA is running. Through the same letter we are also informed in which direction our leaders are running.[32]

STICUSA: A PHASE IN THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION?

What, finally, can be said about the effect in Indonesia and the Netherlands of all this exchange of people, goods, information and services? The *STICUSA Jaarverslagen* give the impression that, in the absence of an independent Indonesian counterpart in Jakarta, the exchange largely remained a one-way-traffic; a fear STICUSA had already expressed in the early stages of its existence. The Indonesian artists educated within the Dutch educational system before the war had, needless to say, already been influenced by western thinking and culture long before the establishment of STICUSA. Their going to the Netherlands gave them the opportunity to travel

30 Liu 1996:123. On Pramoedya in Holland see also Teeuw 1993.

31 '*Sering sekali kami bentrokan di sini*'. Ramadhan K.H. to H.B. Jassin, Amsterdam 31-1-1953. Collection Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra H.B. Jassin, Jakarta.

32 Letter Ramadhan K.H. to H.B. Jassin, Amsterdam 31-1-1953. Collection Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra H.B. Jassin, Jakarta. The Indonesian reads: Dengan surat dari Koolhaas kepada kantor pusat STICUSA (jang saja tjuri dari kamar tempat stensilnja) sedikit demi sedikit kita tahu kemana STICUSA akan larinja. Dengan surat dari Koolhaas itu, kita mengetahui pula kemana pemimpin2 kita larinja'.

to other European countries and broaden their horizons; a new experience that no doubt influenced the individual artist in a number of ways. To determine the ultimate influence of these encounters on the artist's creative work is beyond the scope of this paper.

The effect of STICUSA as an institution on both Holland and Indonesia is probably best analysed within a broader context. In retrospect, STICUSA can be looked upon as an 'after-pain' of colonialism. It therefore might have played a role in the process of decolonization. After 1945, both parties had an interest in the opportunities STICUSA created. For most Dutch, it was indispensable to give prominence to the spreading of Dutch culture in Indonesia in order to fulfil what they regarded as a duty and responsibility: to help building a new Indonesia after the western model. The western-educated Indonesian intellectuals, culture builders of their time, were Republicans, but felt nevertheless a strong affinity with western/Dutch culture, its ideas and concepts. On an emotional level it must have been important for them to stay in dialogue with western culture, using primarily the Dutch language as a window to the West, and in one way or another make the connection with the new-born state.

Ultimately, cultural cooperation between the two parties had to die out due to lack of breeding ground. Before that happened, STICUSA – in total contrast to what it was aiming at – might have facilitated, so to speak, cultural disengagement by giving both parties the time to distance themselves from each other mentally, and get used to the new situation. Although culture is never politically innocent, by the mid-1950s STICUSA's role in Indonesia as an agency for Dutch culture would have come to an end anyway, even without the New Guinea controversy.

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Indonesian Muslims and cultural networks

Hairus Salim HS

Situated in the midst of the turmoil of an Afro-Asian political movement that began in 1940, reached its high point in the Asia Africa Conference of Bandung in 1955, then descended to failure at the 'Second Bandung' in Algiers in 1965, Indonesia – along with Egypt and India – according to David Kimche (1973), occupied a position of non-alignment, that is, neutrality in a political and ideological sense with respect to the Cold War between the communist and capitalist blocs. What is especially true for Indonesia, writes Kimche, is that this neutrality was intensified by an attitude of 'militant anti-colonialism'. In fact, non-aligned countries formed a minority of the African-Asian nations, but African-Asian politics was exactly what the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist group was calling for.

The resulting tendency, as formulated by Soekarno and shaped by a combination of factors (anti-Western indoctrination absorbed from Japan during World War II; four years of a war of independence against Western nations; Allied support for the Netherlands), led to an intensely anti-Western attitude in Indonesia and a simultaneous drift toward the Communist Bloc. It was this position that characterized Indonesia's orientation to the outside world and spread to various areas of life during the era of the Soekarno government until its fall.

Any kind of relationship with Communist Bloc countries was interpreted in an extremely positive sense, because this mirrored a nationalist, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist attitude. And the state supported such relations in many areas. On the other hand, any kind of contact with the West, including consumption of or imitation of a taste for products of Western culture, was considered to be 'anti-revolutionary' and as supporting an imperialist and colonial perspective.

In a political context such as this, it is interesting that cultural ties between Indonesia and Islamic countries were continuously cul-

tivated; in many respects they could be said to have strengthened. Thus, beneath all the sound and fury generated by the communist and capitalist blocs that served to decorate the cultural debates of this period, cultural relations with Islamic nations like Egypt and Pakistan persisted.

In this essay I want to trace the human networks and communication pathways that made up these cultural relations by examining the roles of three artists and cultural leaders: Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka) (1908-1981), Usmar Ismail (1921-1971), and Bahrum Rangkuti (1919-1977). By limiting the approach to an examination of the roles of just these three important figures, it is very possible that I am ignoring others who played similar roles. And by stressing only the connections and networks involving these three leaders with Islamic nations, I am admittedly ignoring their relations with other (non-Islamic) countries.

HAMKA; CULTURAL BROKER BETWEEN INDONESIA AND EGYPT

In 1950, Hamka served in the Department of Religion as a Member of the Council for Indonesian Pilgrims to Mecca (Anggota Majelis Perjalanan Haji Indonesia). Hamka took advantage of this opportunity to travel to countries in the Middle East. Making trips to other Arab countries while providing support to or solving the problems encountered by pilgrims (*haji*) was usual for Indonesian Islamic officials, both for the sake of the pilgrims as well as in the interest of paying visits to important Middle Eastern Muslim leaders.[1] But for Hamka, the additional travel, especially to Egypt, was unusually significant. This was his first visit to the 'land of the pyramids'. Until then, Egypt had existed only in his mind, serving to embellish his religious imagination as well as his feelings and representations about the greatness of Islamic civilization, as is strongly enunciated throughout his writings, in his fiction as well as his essays on culture and religion.

Hamka was clearly not the first Indonesian Muslim to visit Egypt. Relations between Indonesia and Egypt existed long before Indo-

1 Other examples of officials who made similar journeys include K.H. Masjkur, K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, K.H. Wahib Wahab, and K.H. Idham Chalid.

nesian independence and had developed continuously as a result of the presence of Indonesian students in Cairo.[2] It was thanks to this student network, moreover, that Egypt became the first country to offer recognition of Indonesian independence. By means of its role in the Arab League, Egypt encouraged other Arab nations to recognize Indonesia as well.[3]

These relations were quickly continued in a formal way after international recognition of Indonesian independence, with H.M. Rasjidi becoming Indonesian Ambassador to Egypt and Saudi Arabia and, of special importance, with M. Natsir becoming Minister of Information and then Prime Minister.[4] When he was Prime Minister, Natsir actively promoted relations with Islamic nations through visits to a number of them, including Egypt and Pakistan.[5]

In my view, however, Hamka gave a new dimension to relations that were initially purely religious and political, adding a cultural nuance to them. Since the 1930s, through the journal *Pedoman Masjarakat* that he edited, Hamka had become famous for his writings and fictional works that were closely linked to the Islamic world, especially Egypt.

While Hamka's visit to Egypt in 1950 strengthened the cultural position he already held, it also elevated his role in the years to come as a cultural broker between Indonesia and Egypt. This role grew stronger at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, as a result of his translations and commentaries, as well as the two journals about Islamic culture that he fostered, *Pandji Masjarakat* and *Gema Islam*.

Hamka poured his observations and jottings into the book *Di lembah sungai Nil* (In the valley of the river Nile) (1952), which was published by the firm Gapura, a contributor of additional travel

2 For studies about the situation and role of Indonesians studying in Egypt from the early 19th century to the present, see for example William R. Roff (1970), Mona Abaza (1993, 1996), and Michael Laffan (2004).

3 Read the commentaries of the former activists Ismail Banda (1947) and M. Zein Hassan (1980).

4 Rasjidi had been both secretary and treasurer to the Republic of Indonesia's first foreign diplomatic mission, to Egypt in 1947. The mission to the government of King Farouk, which was led by H. Agus Salim, also included Nazir Dt. Pamuncak, Abdul Kadir, A.R. Baswedan and Rasjidi, an alumnus of Al-Azhar University, who later became Indonesia's Ambassador to Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as the first Minister of Religion (Soebagijo I.N. 1985:xx).

5 It is worth noting that at this time Masjumi was still a large federated political party serving as an umbrella organization for all Islamic organizations, including NU and PSII. Natsir's foreign trips, both during and subsequent to his time as Prime Minister (1950-1951), were continuously and fully reported in the magazine *Hikmah*.

funds for his trip.[6] In this account, Hamka wrote at length about his impressions and feelings of amazement about Egypt and its culture, together with accounts of his meetings with a number of leading Egyptian authors and intellectuals whom he had known of before only through their writings.

Accompanied by several students and staff members from the Indonesian Embassy, among them Zein Hassan and Fuad Fachruddin,[7] Hamka met Husain Haikal, for example, a leading Egyptian novelist and writer who had once been the leader of the Liberal Party, which opposed the Wafd Party that was then in power. During that meeting, Haikal suggested that there was a need for translations of Indonesian works into Arabic, and he asked Zein Hassan, a secretary in the Indonesian Embassy, to add a cultural attaché to the Embassy in order to strengthen cultural cooperation. Thaha Husein, a well-known writer and intellectual who at that time served as Minister of Training and Education, was another important figure Hamka met.

Hamka also visited important educational and cultural institutions. He went to Al-Azhar University and was received by Syeikh Al-Azhar, Abdul Majid Salim, Syeikh Abdul Latif Darraz, who was executive director of Azhar, and Prof Farid Wajidi, a well-known intellectual and chief editor of the journal *Madjalah Al-Azhar*. Stopping by Fuad I University, Hamka met with Prof. Amin Al-Khulli, professor of Arabic literature.[8]

Another important encounter was with Dr Ahmad Amin, who became chairman of the Institute of Arab Culture, which was under the auspices of the Arab League and based in Cairo. Ahmad Amin was known for his books on history, philosophy, and literature. He headed the magazine *Ats-Tsaqafah* (Culture) and before that an institute for translating works in English and French into Arabic.

6 Gapura was a publishing enterprise owned by Andjar Asmara alias Abisin Abas, a famous journalist and filmmaker before the war. Earlier he had been known as the director of a legendary *Dardanella* theatre group. For more on Andjar Asmara, see Soebagijo I.N.(1981:212-6 and Ramadhan K.H. 1982.

7 Zein and Fuad were former Indonesian student activists in Egypt who took part in the struggle to bring about recognition of Indonesian independence by Egypt and other Arab nations. Later they both worked for the Indonesian Embassy in Cairo. Fuad returned to Indonesia and was given a job by the Department of Foreign Affairs '[. . .] in recognition by the government of the Republic of Indonesia for our services in the Middle East', according to Fuad Fachruddin's own account (1991:154) of his position.

8 Apart from Haikal and Husein, Hamka also met with the intellectual and writer Abbas Mahmud Aqqad; Fikri Abaza, journalist and chief editor of *Madjalah Al-Musawwar*, which was published by Al-Hilal press; and Muhammad Ali Alubah, a writer who had once served as Minister of Training and Education. Because of lack of time, Hamka was unable to meet with Taufik el-Hakim, Zaki Mubarak, Hassan Zayyat, among others.

Hamka, 1951. Photo by 'Kempen'. (Pusat Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin)

Hamka thought that it was important to visit such individuals and their institutions because, as he put it, he too was a member of the Institute of Indonesian Culture (Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia, LKI), an organization established by the government in 1948 to assist with formulating the direction of Indonesian culture, which, like the Institute for Arabic Culture, had the convening of cultural congresses as one of its important functions.[9]

These various meetings not only point to the importance of leading Egyptian intellectuals for Hamka, but also Hamka's significance for them. Hamka's visit to Egypt clarified what had been going on inside his head during this time and increased his fascination for the advances in religious and cultural thought taking place in Egypt.

Hamka's admiration for Egypt was well founded. Since the 19th century and the era of Mohamad Ali Pasya, Egypt had been developing and adopting modernizing ideas from the West. Egyptian efforts at translating Western literature and philosophy into Arabic, printing cultural journals, sending students to Europe, and making progress in higher education were famous throughout the Islamic world. With its long history, ancient society, and modern tendencies, Egypt was the most cosmopolitan and modern Islamic nation of the time. For Indonesian Muslims, Egypt in this period was an example of how Islam and progress could be joined together to form an intimate interrelationship.

By means of the Arabic books and journals that came into his hands, Hamka learned about, followed the course of, and was captivated by the progressive movement in Egypt.[10] Hamka's thinking about nationalism, a resonant concept in this era, was given added conviction by, and was even derived from, Mustafa Kamil, an Egyp-

9 Four years later the LKI merged with BMKN. At the Congress for Indonesian Culture in Bandung, 6-11 October 1951, Hamka was listed as one of nine members of a committee headed by Dr Bahder Djohan, with Soeratno Sastroamidjojo as its general secretary (Nunus Supardi 2007:166-7). It is highly likely that it was Bahder Djohan, who was Minister of Education and Culture in the Natsir Cabinet, who invited Hamka to become involved in the LKI/BMKN. Many of Bahder Djohan's writings about education and culture often appeared in the two magazines edited by Hamka. According to Amura (1977), it was through the BMKN that Hamka recruited young Muslim writers like Sidi Gazalba, M. Radjab, Amura, Amrin Thaib, and others to take an active role in the cultural field. In the debates during these cultural congresses, Hamka always identified himself and was identified as a 'representative' and 'champion' of Islamic culture.

10 Thus it is easy to understand why Hamka (1984:262) was receptive to the recommendation of H. Agus Salim, who was Consul in Mecca at that time, that Hamka forego his intention of studying in Mecca and return to Indonesia, because studying religion in his native land, Salim felt, was superior to studying it in Mecca. Mecca was a place for religious devotionalism, and certainly not, as Hamka imagined, a place for completing the acquisition of modern knowledge and culture.

tian nationalist activist (Deliar Noer 1983). This is the reason why Hamka made such a conscious effort to introduce the Indonesian public to the cultural life and literature of a dynamic Egypt. In *Kenang-kenangan hidup* (Memoirs), Hamka (1951:88) wrote, referring to himself in third person as 'Bung Haji' (Brother Haji):

> Without ignoring others, it is true to say that Bung Haji was the first to bring the influence of Modern Arabic literature to bear on Indonesian literature. He was the one who first brought Manfaluti here. [...] Because of his fear of being 'left behind', as long as he was in charge of the journal *Pedoman Masjarakat* he was constantly alert to the progress being made by Arabic literature and culture that was developing in Egypt.[11]

It is interesting to note that although Hamka had never studied about or visited Egypt before 1950, he already felt a close affinity to that country. In *Di lembah sungai Nil* he wrote:

> The basis for what I borrowed during the time I was publishing journals, writing books, setting forth my ideas, establishing my perspective on life, and learning about the principles of philosophy, the changes underway in religious thought, even Western literature: it came from Egypt. I read Goethe, Shakespeare, Gide, Carlyle, Anton Chekhov, Gorky, all of them because of Egypt. Even though I had never been there.[12]

In 1931 Balai Pustaka published Hamka's *Laila Majnun*, which was influenced by an Arabic novel, and in the late 1940s Hamka translated Alexander Dumas (*fils*)'s *La Dame aux camellias* (the Indonesian translation was titled *Margaretta Gauthier*) from an Arabic version of the story.

Hamka obtained the works of Egypt's best-known writers during the 1920s and 1930s, authors such as Mustafa Shadiq, Zaki

11 Boleh dikata dengan tidak melupakan yang lain, bahwa Bung Haji kitalah yang mula2 membawa pengaruh perpustakaan Arab Modern kedalam perpustakaan Indonesia. Dia yang mula2 'membawa' Manfaluti kemari. [...] Karena takutnya akan 'ketinggalan', selama dia memimpin majalah *Pedoman Masyarakat*, maka senantiasalah dia menuruti kemajuan Kesusasteraan Kebudayaan dan Perpustakaan Arab yang berkembang di Mesir itu.

12 Dasar jang saja ambil seketika mengeluarkan madjalah, mengarang buku2, mengeluarkan fikiran, menentukan garis pandangan hidup, mengetahui dasar2 filsafat, perobahan berfikir dalam agama, bahkan mengenai kesusasteran Baratpun dari Mesir. Saja batja Guthe, Shakespeare, Shaw, Gide, Garlyle, Anton Shikoc, Gorki, semuanja dengan perantaraan Mesir. Walaupun Mesir belum pernah saja lihat. (Hamka 1952:24.)

Mubarak, Hafiz Ibrahim, Syauqi Bek, Khalil Matran, and Al-Manfaluthi, from the Arabic-language bookstore owned by Salim Nabhan in Surabaya, especially when he visited that city. It is also probable that he acquired books like these by entrusting money to, or receiving presents from friends who had been studying in Egypt. The postal service by sea made this possible at this point in time. Zainuddin Labay, one of his father's students who also taught at Sumatera Thawalib, made frequent use of it. Hamka remembered him because of the size of his private library, a place where Hamka could read literary works in Arabic during his youth.

In actual fact, Hamka was hardly the first person to enter the network of relations between Indonesia and Egypt. His father, H. Abdul Karim Amrullah, had been in charge of the journal *Al-Munir* which began appearing in April 1911 and had readers among the students and alumni of Al-Azhar.[13] As suggested by its name, *Al-Munir* was influenced by *Al-Manar*, founded by Muhammad Abduh in Egypt. Hamka's father was also a delegate from the Netherlands Indies to the 1924 Islamic World Congress in Egypt. In 1926, he received a Doctor Honoris Causa degree from Al-Azhar.[14] It is interesting that students from Padang were the dominant group among Indonesians studying in Egypt at that time. Most of them had studied at the school founded by Hamka's father in Padang Pajang, Sumatera Thawalib. It was not surprising, therefore, that Hamka often received supplies of books from his fellow Sumatrans who were studying or working in Cairo.[15]

Hamka's visit to Egypt provided him with a more balanced view of that country and broadened his horizons. He had to admit that

13 Hamka 1958. For more on *Al-Munir*, see Azyumardi Azra 1999.

14 Muchtar Lufti, who studied at Al-Azhar and who had been a student of Hamka's father in Padang, played an important role as the head of the honorary degree committee. Before going to Egypt, Muchtar had been an anti-colonial activist. On the point of being taken into custody, he was offered a hiding place by Hamka's father and then smuggled in disguise to Egypt via Pekan Baru and Malaya. With the help of Indonesian students in Egypt, Muchtar established the journals *Seruan Al-Azhar* and *Pilihan Timur*, both of which were anti-colonial and nationalist.

15 For example, according to commentary by Rusydi (1983:94), Hamka's father once was sent the book *Qisshatul Adab fii 'Alam* (History of World Literature) by Ahmad Amin. The person who sent the book was M. Zein Hassan who worked at the Indonesian embassy in Cairo and in several other Arab countries. According to Rusydi, Zein was a close friend of Hamka's family and the one who sent books to Hamka the most frequently, either at Hamka's request or on his own initiative (interview with Rusydi, 8-2-2009). I think that Zein was not the only one sending books. Moreover, Hamka was a prolific correspondent, writing to friends abroad, including Egypt, such as Emzita (1977), his former secretary in Bukit Tinggi and a former student whom he had adopted as his own son. Emzita later worked at the Indonesian Embassy for the United Arab Republic. Recall as well that one of his novels, the famous *Di bawah lindungan ka'abah* (1976), which was set in Mecca during the late 1920s, opens with a chapter entitled: 'Letter from Egypt' (see also footnote 7).

Egypt was a more developed and open society than Indonesia. This is not to say that he was not critical. With respect to the position of women, for example, Egypt, despite having many champions on its behalf, was still conservative, in Hamka's view, as could be seen from the fact that women were still not admitted to Al-Alzhar and were restricted in their access to politics. When he met with women's organizations, Hamka took pride in the fact that Indonesia already had two female ministers, the Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs, a fact that astonished women activists in Egypt. Hamka was also proud of the fact that in Bukittinggi there was a school for women, Dinayah Puteri, established and directed by Rahmah el-Junusiyah.[16]

Following his visit, Hamka became increasingly committed to promulgating Egyptian ideas, education, religion, and culture. For all its strengths and weaknesses, he saw Egypt as the centre of a new age of Islamic resurgence. His perspective had certainly become more critical and balanced. During the 1950s, while serving in the Department of Religion, he helped manage the Masjid Agung Kebayoran (Great Kebayoran Mosque) and was active in the Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (BMKN, Council for Deliberations on National Culture). Apart from this, he continued to scratch away with his pen, becoming a regular contributor to the daily *Abadi* and a member of the editorial board of the Masjumi journal *Hikmah*, one of the Islamic publications that had a national distribution during this era. From 1956 on, however, like several intellectuals and writers in Egypt whom he admired, Hamka also became involved in politics and was a member of the Constituent Assembly. He gained this post through his membership in Muhammadiyah, the most important component of Masjumi. Hamka admitted that he wasn't particularly active in politics, merely serving when needed as a 'vote getter' to insure a Masjumi victory. He soon withdrew from the political world. In the words of his well-known motto: 'The political field is not my arena' (*Lapangan siasat bukan medanku*).

16 Hamka 1952:99. It is interesting that when he visited Indonesia in 1956, Syeikh Abdurrahman Tadj, Rector of Al-Azhar, visited Bukittinggi and in particular the school Diniyah Puteri, founded by Rahmah. The Syeikh was amazed by the school, the likes of which did not yet exist in Egypt. It was not until 1962 that a similar girls school was opened at Al-Azhar under the rectorship of Syeikh Syaltout. In 1957, Rahmah el-Yunusiyah, known as the 'Kartini of the Islamic movement', was invited to Egypt after she had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. During her visit Rahmah received the highest honorary religious degree awarded by the faculty, the *Syeikhah*. According to Hamka, this degree had never been granted to a woman before. One result of this honour was that graduates of Diniyah Puteri were sent to study at Al-Azhar on Egyptian government scholarships. See Hamka 1958:265; Aminuddin Rasyad 1977.

In 1958, after returning home from attending the Symposium on Islam in Lahore, Pakistan, where he was a member of the Indonesian delegation, Hamka continued his journey to Egypt at the invitation of the Egyptian government. On 21 January he delivered a speech in Arabic entitled 'The influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia', on the occasion of receiving the degree Doctor Honoris Causa from Al-Azhar University. The diploma is officially stamped in Arabic: *Ustazd Fakhriyah*.[17] The granting of this degree expressed the gratitude of the Egyptian government to Hamka for his work in spreading knowledge about Egyptian culture in Indonesia and serving as an important and prominent cultural 'broker'.

In 1959 Hamka founded the bi-monthly journal *Pandji Masjarakat*, which announced itself as a journal of Islamic knowledge and culture. In the lead essay published in the first issue, it is stated that *Pandji Masjarakat* will 'place emphasis on its responsibilities in the area of popular culture and knowledge'. Apart from this, it is hoped that '[the journal's] publication will hasten the birth of a genuine awareness as part of the development of new thought and literature, both of which are important elements in a culture and body of knowledge that are in harmony with the reform and modernization of the true Islam' (*Sebab 'Pandji Masjarakat'* 1959).

Islamic reform and modernization were not entirely new concepts. They arrived in Indonesia in the middle of the 19th century. But the injection of literature and culture into this process was certainly novel, and this is what Hamka repeatedly carried out via *Pandji Masjarakat*. In the previous *Pedoman Masjarakat* he published novels in serial form, most of them his own work; in *Pandji Masjarakat*, he provided space for poetry and short stories, along with essays on culture and general knowledge.

Pandji Masjarakat soon became an important hub of information about Islamic culture in Indonesia as well as the Islamic world. By means of the journal, Hamka assembled Muslim writers and cultural experts to publish articles on culture and science, both locally conceived as well as adapted or translated from elsewhere, especially coming from or about Egypt and Pakistan.

17 Rusydi 1983:6. This speech was later translated into Indonesian and published by Tintamas in Jakarta in 1962. In 1959, Idham Chalid, the young leader of NU from Kalimantan Selatan and alumnus of Pesantren Gontor, Ponorogo, who had close ties to and a degree that was recognized by Al-Azhar, also received a degree of Doctor Honoris Causa from that university. For more on Idham and his connection to Egypt and Al-Azhar, see Arief Mudatsir Mandan (2008). 'Last but not least', Soekarno, who portrayed himself as a leader of world Islam, received an honorary degree in philosophy from Al-Azhar University on 24 April 1960.

During the short period of its publication, the two years between mid-1959 and mid-1961, every issue of *Pandji Masjarakat* contained an article from or about thought and the development of the sciences in Egypt. Of course Egypt was not the only Muslim country to be discussed, but it is true to say that conditions and intellectual developments in Egypt dominated the pages of the journal, so much so that it was accused of being an agent for the dissemination of Arab ideas and culture.

Connections with students or other Indonesians in Egypt or to Egyptians in Indonesia strongly supported the development of the journal, especially with respect to editorial decisions. It is known that, personally or via *Pandji Masjarakat*, Hamka maintained relations with Ali Fahmi Al-Amrousi, Egypt's Ambassador to Indonesia. According to Junus Amir Hamzah (1963), it was Ali Fahmi who arranged for the granting of an honorary degree from Al-Azhar to Hamka.[18] Another important figure was Dr Mohammad Mahmoud Ridwan, Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of the United Arab Republic in Indonesia at the time. Mahmoud Ridwan was greatly interested in the world of the arts, literature, and philosophy.[19] It was reported that both Amrousi and Ridwan visited the office of *Pandji Masjarakat* several times. Hamka and his friends also felt free to pay frequent visits to the Egyptian Embassy in Jakarta.

Another close relationship was with Ahmad Shalaby, a professor at the University of Cairo, Director of the research institute Muktamar 'Alam Islamy, and cultural editor for the newspaper *Al-Ahram*, the largest paper in Egypt. Under a cooperative agreement between Indonesia and the United Arab Republic (UAR), Shalaby was assigned to teach at PTAIN (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri, the state Islamic university, now UIN, Universitas Islam Negeri) Yogyakarta between 1955 until 1961. Shalaby opened a new route for Indonesian students to go to Egypt for further study. Earlier, most Indonesian students enrolled in Al-Azhar; beginning in 1955, at Shalaby's recommendation, a number of PTAIN and Jurusan Pedagogi (teachers' college, now Yogyakarta State University, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, UNY) students received Indonesian government scholarships and were sent to study at the Universities

18 Speech by Ali Fahmi Al-Amrousi, 'Revolusionerisme Nabi Muhammad dalam Membina Ummat Baru' (Nabi Muhammad's revolutionary ideas in the building of a new Islamic community), given at the Maulid celebrations in Jakarta, translated in *Pandji Masjarakat*. See Ali Fahmi Al-Amrousi 1959.

19 Ridwan was in fact a frequent contributor. See, for example, *Alam Islamy di zaman depan* (The Islamic world in the age to come) (Mohammad Mahmoud Ridwan 1960) and *Film keagamaan Islam* (Islamic religious film) (Mohammad Mahmoud Ridwan 1962).

of Cairo and Darul 'Ulum. Apart from teaching, Shalaby also delivered many public lectures, often by radio broadcast. Almost all of his books on the subject of Islamic history and culture were translated into Indonesian; among the translators was Prof Mukhtar Jahja, professor at PTAIN and an Egyptian university alumnus.[20] Hamka and the *Pandji Masjarakat* circle also maintained close contact with Syeikh Shaltout, who was made Rector of Al-Azhar in 1958. A year after assuming the leadership, the journal praised the progress that Al-Azhar had made under Shaltout: 'After only a year of his leadership there are many improvements to be felt that will lead to progress. A lot of new energy fills ideas that are progressive ....' Thus wrote the editors of *Pandji Masjarakat* (*Semangat Baru* 1960:17).

On a monthly basis the editors of *Pandji Masjarakat* routinely received issues of *Al-Islam* and *Al-Azhar* published by Al-Azhar University. They were also sent a copy of *Al-Fatwa*, a book containing a compilation of Syeikh Shaltout's responses to questions from the Muslim community, as well as a book of his public addresses in 1959. When the Department of Religion invited Syeikh Shaltout to Indonesia in 1961, he visited the offices of *Pandji Masjarakat* and the Great Kebayoran Mosque, which Hamka was managing at the time. When he went to the mosque he officiated at its renaming as Masdjid Agung Al-Azhar, a clear reference to the university of the same name.[21]

Hamka resigned as a staff member of the Department of Religion because of a government regulation that prohibited bureaucrats in the 'F' category from belonging to a political party. Hamka was then prepared to devote himself to the journal *Pandji Masjarakat* and to help with Masjumi. But in 1960 Mas-

20 Ahmad Shalaby's article (1959) 'Mentjapai masjarakat Islam dalam ikatan ke-Islaman' (Achieving an Islamic society through commitment to Islam). This article was in fact a condensed version of his book, translated into Indonesian as *Masjarakat Islam*. In the introduction, Ahmad Shalaby (1957:iv) acknowledged that his book was 'inspired by Indonesia [...] an echo of my life there, an echo of my studies with my students, an echo of my lectures to learned young people'.

21 Muhammad Shaltout was the popular Syeikh al-Azhar in Indonesia. Excerpts of his ideas and works on religion were translated into Indonesian; see, for example, *Fatwa* (1972) by Zaini Dahlan and Bustami A. Gani. During the meeting of the Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI, Association for Islamic Arts and Culture) on 15-17 December 1961 in Jakarta, for example, one of the keynote speakers, Al-Ustazd Al-Fadhil Abdullah bin Nuh, quoted a pronouncement by Shaltout in support of the importance of art in Islam. Shaltout was of the opinion that there was no basis in the Quran, the Hadith, or theological analogies (*qias*) for banning singing or any musical instrument. See *Gema Islam* 1-1 (15 January 1962):15-6. Sidi Gazalba, a contributor at the HSBI meeting and a prolific writer on Islam and culture, also quoted Abdullah bin Nuh in the section 'The mosque and the arts' of his book *Mesjid; Pusat ibadat dan kebudajaan Islam* (The mosque; A centre of worship and Islamic culture) (Sidi Gazalba 1962:217).

jumi was disbanded and outlawed by Soekarno because of the party's alleged involvement with the PRRI rebellion. In that same year, on 17 August 1960, *Pandji Masjarakat* was banned because it published Mohamad Hatta's 'Demokrasi Kita' (Our democracy), which was critical of Soekarno's Guided Democracy (Mohamad Hatta 1960).

Hamka's field of action grew more circumscribed. During these years he was only active as the chairman of the Majelis Seniman Budajawan Islam (MASBI, Council of Islamic Artists and Cultural Figures), which fell under the direction of the Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI, Association for Islamic Arts and Culture).[22] The problem was that HSBI's sphere of activities grew narrower because it was constantly being linked to Masjumi, which had been declared illegal. One place where Hamka was still free to do as he pleased was the Al-Azhar Mosque, which was located near his home.

Originally called the Great Kebayoran Mosque (Masjid Agung Kebayoran), this mosque was built in 1952. Here Hamka regularly delivered early morning prayer talks (*kuliah subuh*), attended by a large congregation. As competition with artists on the Left grew more intense, the garden and auditorium of the mosque were much in use for artistic events, art exhibitions, theatrical performances and so forth, especially those organized by HSBI.[23] It is also important to note that the editorial office of *Pandji Masjarakat* (and later of *Gema Islam*) was located in another part of the Al-Azhar Mosque building.

In 1962 the Yayasan Perpustakaan Islam (The Islamic Library Foundation) established the magazine *Gema Islam*, with Lieutenant-General Sudirman as publisher, Colonel Mukhlas Rowi as executive editor, and Rusydi Hamka as managing editor. Listed as members of the editorial board were H. Anwar Tjokroaminoto from the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII, the Indonesian Islamic League Party), H. Mahbub Djunaidi, a reporter and writer from the Nahdlatul Ulama party (NU, the Awakening

22 MASBI was the advisory board for HSBI, consisting of cultural authorities and senior *ulama*. For more on HSBI, see Choirotun Chisaan in this volume.

23 For example, the play *Titik terang* (Bright spot) by Arifin Yunan was performed in the square in front of the mosque. The biggest theatre event was the performance of the play *Di sekitar Maulid Nabi besar Muhammad SAW* (Nearing the birthday of the great prophet Muhammad, may the blessings of God and peace be upon him), which was written by Yunan Helmy Nasution, chairman of HSBI, and performed in the open space of the mosque garden on 1 September 1961. According to reports, the performance was attended by 30,000 spectators. One piece of evidence about the colossal size of the performance is the fact that 15 horses were brought on stage.

of Muslim Clergy), and Mahmudah Mawardi, a woman activist, also from the NU. Hamka was mentioned merely as an 'assistant'. In the inaugural edition, General A.H. Nasution's contribution served as an official stamp of approval for two officers under his command to assist *Gema Islam* as a service to society (*Sambutan M.K.N/KASAD* 1962).

The motto of the magazine was '*Mengisi dan Melaksanakan Pola Pembangunan Semesta Berentjana*' (Fulfill and carry out the blueprint for universal, planned development). An extremely broad and significant slogan! In fact, like *Pandji Masjarakat*, *Gema Islam* provided wide scope for discussions of scientific and cultural issues, short stories, and poetry by both Indonesian Muslim writers and those from other Islamic countries.[24] The same writers contributed to both *Gema Islam* and *Pandji Masjarakat*, a fact that shows that the first journal had simply replaced the second.

Hamka contributed a regular column to *Gema Islam* entitled 'Tafsir Al-Azhar' (Commentaries from Al-Azhar), which he took from the early morning prayer talks that he gave at Al-Azhar Mosque. In addition, he also wrote frequent essays on culture and other subjects. Looking at the editorial staff and the content of the magazine, and taking into consideration all the energy Hamka poured into it, it is clear that he was not simply an 'assistant'. As Rosihan Anwar (1977) acknowledged a few years later, Hamka was really the driving force for the magazine.[25]

Thus in taking over the role of *Pandji Masjarakat* that had preceded it, *Gema Islam* became a critical junction in the network of Islamic cultural information within Indonesia and between Indonesia and the Islamic world. One can say that its role extended beyond editorial matters, because the magazine's management clearly reflected the 'cooperation' that was taking place between the military and the community of Muslim cultural authorities and writers. Two names yet to be mentioned, Bahrum Rangkuti and M. Isa Idris, were both men with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel who were known as activists and writers. Looked at only in terms of the make-up of the editorial board, the magazine shows that all the factions in the Islamic community formed a 'unity', something

24 The inclusion of translations of foreign texts was a conscious choice and considered extremely important, as was noted in the first anniversary issue of *Gema Islam*: 'We consider works in translation by Islamic scholars from outside Indonesia [...] to be beneficial to the reader', see *Gema Islam berusia*, 1963:7.

25 Rosihan Anwar, editor of the newspaper *Pedoman*, which was also banned together with *Pandji Masjarakat*, wrote the weekly column 'Kronik dan Komentar Islam' (Islamic chronicle and commentary) for *Gema Islam*, using the pen name Al-Bahist, which was suggested to him by Hamka.

that was difficult to find in and between political parties.[26] This was due to the fact that the only thing that created unity there was the spirit of opposition generated by the cultural movement on the Left. One can sense a higher level of contentiousness in the pages of *Gema Islam* due to the rise in the political temperature at that time. Maybe this fact marks the essential difference between that magazine and its predecessor *Pandji Masjarakat*.[27]

Apart from short stories, poetry and essays in translation that appeared in *Pandji Masjarakat* and *Gema Islam*, there were also translations of works by Egyptian writers and intellectuals. Such translations into Indonesian reflected a different dimension of Indonesian-Egyptian relations. Although most of them were of religious tracts, there were also many literary works: short stories, plays, and novels. From the beginning Hamka played an important role in this regard.[28]

USMAR ISMAIL; OBSERVING EGYPT, VISITING SAUDI ARABIA

In 1959 Usmar Ismail visited Egypt. At that time Usmar was Indonesia's most famous filmmaker. He began his career as an author, writing poetry, short stories, and plays. A. Teeuw (1952:124-30) in particular regards the play *Sedih dan gembira* (Sad and happy) published by Balai Pustaka (1948) as his important contribution to Indonesian literature. Asrul Sani mentions Usmar as 'someone from the last generation of writers to write or conceive of poetry in the manner of Pujangga Baru'.[29] 'The history of Indonesian film could not be written without also writing the story of his life; the development of Indonesian film cannot be understood without understanding his ideas', Asrul commented.

26 In the realm of party politics there were frequent disagreements between Masjumi and NU on the one hand and Perti (*Pergerakan Tarbijah Islamijah*, Islamic Education Movement) on the other. For more on this subject, see Deliar Noer 1987.

27 At the beginning of its second year of publication *Gema Islam* had a print run of 34,000 copies, compared to 10,000 at its inception. It was planned to raise this number to 40,000 in the second year. According to H.M. Joesoef Ahmad, the publisher, the journal was sent out by mail, so that it could be directly and evenly distributed to all its readers in every corner of the archipelago. See H.M. Joesoef Ahmad 1963:8.

28 For more on the first translations of Arabic literature into Indonesian see further Maya H.T. Liem in this volume and Jedamski 2002.

29 Asrul Sani, 'Sebuah apresiasi' (An appreciation) (1983:11), an introduction to a collection of Usmar Ismail's writings. Asrul Sani (1926-2004) was a poet, essayist, and literary translator, as well as a leading Indonesian filmmaker. Most importantly of all, he provided the inspiration for the 'Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang' (The Gelanggang Testimonial of Beliefs). For more on Asrul Sani, see Ajip Rosidi 1997.

Usmar Ismail in 1949. (Pusat Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin)

Prior to Usmar there were Indonesian filmmakers, including Anjar Asmara who fought to add an Indonesian style to Malay-language films being made in Indonesia. The difference between Usmar and Andjar was that beginning with his film *Darah dan doa* (*The long march*), Usmar was the first director to connect his films to national events that concerned the fate of every Indonesian. 'He was a pioneering figure from the first generation of Indonesian filmmakers who entered the world of film with a wider artistic awareness than ever before' according to Asrul.[30] Because of the way in which he inserted a national consciousness into this film, Usmar became famous as the 'Father of Indonesian Film' and his *Darah dan doa* is considered the first truly Indonesian film.

As a leading filmmaker, Usmar travelled many times to other countries, especially to the US, Italy, and Japan in order to attend seminars and film festivals.[31] In my view, however, his visit to Egypt was especially important, because in so doing he revealed another dimension to his vision about film, one that concerned the countries, politics, and society of Islam.

In his essay entitled 'Meninjau industri film di negara Nasser' (Observing the film industry in Nasser's country), published in *Harian Pedoman*, 23-27 October 1959 in conjunction with his visit to Egypt, Usmar wrote:

> For me Cairo was a *surprise* because I had imagined that I would encounter an Islamic city in the middle ages, where women still wore the veil, with only their eyes visible, where only the sound of praying was heard all day long, where at the most one could enjoy listening to the *gambus* (six-stringed Arab lute). But such was not the case. Cairo was a modern city, no less modern than Paris, London, or Berlin. Indonesians will be sorely disappointed if they imagine that Cairo is the Islamic city of their fantasies.[32]

30 Asrul Sani 1983:11. Usmar is also recorded as having once been an assistant director to Anjar Asmara. See footnote 6.

31 Usmar made comments about his visits and participation in festivals in a number of publications; these were later collected in Usmar Ismail (1983). For some observations about Usmar's view of America and Hollywood, see Tony Day in the present volume.

32 Bagi saya Kairo merupakan suatu surprise karena tadinya saya mengira akan menjumpai suatu kota Islam abad pertengahan di mana para wanita masih berkerudung dan hanya kelihatan mata mereka saja, di mana hanyalah kedengaran orang berzikir sepanjang hari, atau paling-paling hanya akan dapat menikmati musik gambus, ternyata tidak. Kairo adalah kota modern, tidak kalah modern dengan Paris, London, atau Berlin, dan akan amatlah kecewa golongan Islam Indonesia jika mereka menyangka Kairo adalah kota Islam yang terangan-angan dalam pikiran mereka. This article can be found in the collection of essays by Usmar Ismail (1983:210-1). The excerpts here refer to this edition.

Usmar's surprise reminds us of Hamka's when he encountered Egyptian 'progress' years before. The only difference lies in the fact that Hamka's surprise was in contrast to his impressions from his reading, whereas Usmar saw Cairo, the capital of Egypt, afresh with his own eyes. Their different educational backgrounds underlie the fact that Hamka's knowledge about Egypt preceded Usmar's.

In the rest of his essay, Usmar expressed his 'fascination' with the Hotel Nile Hilton, a joint Egyptian-American project on the banks of the Nile, staffed with pretty young girls. He was intrigued by the liberal thinking involved in the building of scores of *night clubs*, including Sahara City, famous for its belly dancers. It was said, writes Usmar, that a visit to this club was a must (*fardhu*) for Indonesian officials coming to Cairo. And this, he added, was natural given the fact that in Indonesia it was rare to get the chance to watch such a risqué show at a public venue.

It was interesting, according to Usmar, that the world of belly dancing in Egypt and Syria became the central plot line in most Arab films. This was just as true of films with a patriotic theme like *Djamila Bouhired* as it was of religious ones like *Khalid bin Walid*, which was funded by the Institute of World Islam (Muktamar 'Alam Islamy). It was not strange, according to Usmar, that thousands of feet of Egyptian film entering Indonesia lay cut into pieces on the office floor of the Board of Film Censors.

Accompanied by Indonesian embassy staff in Cairo, Usmar went to see the two films just mentioned. *Djamila Bouhired* had come to his attention before his arrival in Cairo, because the story of the film was already popular in Indonesia, having been serialized by Rosihan Anwar in the pages of *Harian Pedoman* from February to March 1958.[33] Usmar was curious to see how an Egyptian director would treat a subject that was very much alive in the imaginations of the audience without eliciting inappropriate responses.

33 In his memoir, Rosihan Anwar (1983:195), who edited *Pedoman*, recalled the story of *Djamila Srikandi Alzajair* because it was popular with his readers and increased the circulation of the paper he led. The plot revolves around the struggle of a young girl, Djamila Bouhired, as a member of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN, National Liberation Front) against the French. Although she was captured and tortured, she refused to surrender and continued to fight on. According to Rosihan, the story was written by Lakdar Brahimi, who became the representative of the FLN in Jakarta and was based on what he had read in newspapers like *Le Figaro* and *l'Humanité*. Laskar wrote his story in English, which was then translated by *Pedoman*. Rosihan Anwar was a close friend of Usmar Ismail's, and together with Abu Hanifah they formed the theatre group 'Maya'. When Usmar went to the United States to study film in 1952-1953, Rosihan took over as head of Perfini.

GALA PREMIER
Film terbesar dari revolusi menentang Pendjadjahan oleh Srikandi Aldjazair
"DJAMILAH BOUCHRIED"
Oleh Pengurus Besar Al-Djamiatul Waslijah
Di BIOSKOP CARYA Djalan Gunung Sahari. Tgl. 4 Mei 1962 djam 19.00
Hasil bersih buat
Santunan Jatim Piatu Al-Washlijah dan Pembinaan
Universitas Al-Washlijah.
Penjelenggara GALA PREMIER
Letkol. H. Baharuddin Ali
H. Djafar Zainuddin
Kapten Yunan Helmy Nasution
Nj. Iskandar Ishak
Nj. A. Hamzah Nasution

Indonesian poster for the Egyptian film *Djamila Bouhired*

Unlike most Egyptian films, *Djamila* had flow and pace, according to Usmar, and the actors were convincing. Even so, he felt that some of the scenes were too long and unrealistic. He praised the actor Magda who played the role of Djamila, a view shared by the Moscow Film Festival jury that named her the best actress for 1959.[34]

Usmar also had the opportunity to meet Miss Magda, the director of Magda Films, which produced *Djamila Bouhired*. Miss Magda was the company's lead actor. Their conversations led to a plan to cooperate in the making of a film in either Indonesia or Egypt. In the immediate future, they agreed to have Usmar's film company Perfini make *Djamila Bouhired* available to viewers in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the film *Khalid bin Walid*, which told the story of a heroic figure during the early period of the spread of Islam, was not considered to be on a par with Hollywood films with their spectacular scenes and settings. This was true despite the fact that the film had been made using Technicolor and Cinemascope, making it the most expensive film produced in Asia. Usmar was certain, however, that the film would appeal to the Islamic community in Indonesia because of its theme.[35] Notwithstanding that fact, he also thought that propaganda for the revival of a pan-Arab state in line with Nasser's political views had been inserted into both films. For an outsider like himself, this message seemed a bit forced.

Usmar (1983:215) summed up his view of Egyptian films by saying that Egyptian films still conveyed an aura of religious poetry (*kasidah*) and belly dancing. Yet, despite the fact that Egypt was known as a centre of Islamic culture throughout the world, its films contained sex scenes featuring kissing and cruelty. This appeared to be perfectly allowable in the Egyptian context. Indonesia, on the other hand, was at that moment undergoing a process of self-censorship, involving the elimination of all kinds of cultural excesses. According to Usmar, this made Indonesia a more mature location for a world centre of religion.

During these years, the world of Indonesian film was beset by various problems ranging from insufficient funds and limited government-run facilities, to domination by imported films. These issues should have been the concern of the film industry alone. But they became entangled in politics – the struggle to recover West Irian, the PRRI regional rebellion involving both the Masjumi and PSI (Partai Sosialis Indonesia) political parties, the British colonial

34 At the same festival Usmar's film *Pedjoeang* (Fighter) won the prize for the best actor, for the role played by Bambang Hermanto.

35 *Khalid bin Walid* was one of the few Egyptian films to be distributed and shown both in commercial theatres as well as at the Cultural Centre of the United Arab Republic in Jakarta. See Mohammed Mahmoud Ridwan 1962.

presence on the Malay Peninsula – with the result that controversies in the film world became political ones. The politics of film followed the international political trends of the cold war and divided along two opposing blocs (Salim Said 1979).

Usmar did not occupy an advantageous position in this political situation. He had been the first Indonesian to study film at UCLA (The University of California Los Angeles), funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, in 1952-1953. On his return to Indonesia, he made films in which he was much concerned with matters of film aesthetics. Because of his American credentials, he was asked by the Rockefeller Foundation to recommend suitable candidates for scholarships to study in the US. Usmar took a number of his films to international film festivals abroad. With his American ties, his involvement with film festivals held in 'capitalist bloc' countries, and especially because of a number of his films that were deemed to be 'anti-revolutionary', Usmar was accused of being a fellow-traveller of the PSI and a lackey of the Americans.[36]

The '*penutupan studio*' (closure of the studios) affair (1957), which involved Usmar, Djamaluddin Malik and the Association of Indonesian Film Companies (Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia, PPFI), further dragged him into the vortex of political conflict. The affair originated from the government's failure to monitor the film industry, so that imported films, especially from India, pushed locally made movies out of the market, while local studios were threatened with bankruptcy because capital was no longer available for making films. However, the Union of Film Workers (Sarekat Buruh Film, Sarbufi), which had ties to LEKRA, refused to go along with the decision to close the studios. Instead, they proposed the banning of American films and a government take-over of the affected studios. Even more threateningly, they accused the American Motion Picture Association of Indonesia (AMPAI), which distributed American films in Indonesia, of being behind the move to close the studios.[37]

I believe that Usmar's visit to Egypt must be considered in the light of these events. As someone who had long been mesmerized by Western ideas and modes of expression – starting from the time he plunged into theatre until his immersion in the world of film – Usmar's decision to visit Egypt is very significant. It seems to suggest an important shift in his view of his artistic practice. Examined carefully, however, this shift had nothing to do with aesthetic pressures: its origins were political.

36 See Misbach Yusa Biran 2008:116-7; Usmar Ismail 1983. For more on Usmar's Rockefeller grant and impressions of Hollywood, see Tony Day in this volume.

37 See Usmar Ismail 1983:91-7; Misbach Yusa Biran 2008:157-69; Salim Said 1991:74-92. Compare Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin M. Dahlan (2008:201-75), especially chapter 5 on film.

If we consider the film *Djamila*, for example, Usmar (1983:213) states that he was motivated by the 'desire to see how Egyptian directors processed events that were still fresh in the minds of the viewer without giving rise to unwelcome reactions'. Clearly, this aim reminds us of the problems he was encountering in his own country. Like *Djamila*, Usmar's films took up the theme of heroism. The difference was that his treatment of heroism was more realistic. But because this was the case, his films *Darah dan doa* and *Enam djam di Djogja* (Six hours in Yogya), which 'processed events that were still fresh in the minds of the viewer' failed to find a receptive audience. In the first film it was felt that Usmar exaggerated the role of the Siliwangi Division and portrayed the Darul Islam supporters (Indonesian Islamic State from the Arabic *dar al-Islam*), and Indonesian Islamic Army (Tentara Islam Indonesia) as traitors. In the second, he didn't present a representation of revolutionary fervour since he included the Dutch army in the story. Both films had to go before the censors and were attacked in the media, especially by the Left.[38]

In his treatment of reality in these two films, Usmar was not dealing with aesthetic issues, but political ones. He sought freedom to create. Censorship, on both political and moral grounds, acted to inhibit creativity. It is apparent that Usmar thought that the politics of Egyptian films were rather ideal. In actual fact, the inclusion of scenes in Egyptian movies where men and women were intimate with one another, which in Indonesia tended to be thought of as 'forbidden', offered wide creative possibilities. On the subject of how politics entered into the themes of Egyptian films, it is true that Usmar complained about the amount of political propaganda in them, something that he found repugnant.

Usmar's journey to Egypt, and his intention of collaborating with Egyptian producers in making movies, was therefore more of a political response than an aesthetic quest. The choice of Egypt was no accident. On the one hand Egypt was a nation whose people were Muslim and was an important exponent of the international Afro-Asian movement. On the other hand, Egypt possessed a strongly socialist but anti-communist ideology. And in addition, Egypt, of all the world's Muslim nations, was synonymous with progress. Turning toward Egypt was a tactical political move that was at once pro-Islam, anti-imperialist, in solidarity with the Afro-Asian anti-colonial movements, and pro-socialist, but not pro-communist.

38 Similar accusations of not being revolutionary were later experienced by Usmar's colleagues at Perfini when they made films about the revolution, like Djaduk Djajakusuma, director of *Embun* (Dew, 1951), and Asrul Sani because of his *Pagar kawat berduri* (Barbed-wire fence, 1961). See Usmar Ismail 1983:53-66.

Moreover, Egyptian films were already reasonably popular in Indonesia. During this period films from Egypt and Pakistan entered Indonesia via an importer by the name of Ridwan P. Lubis.[39] According to the cultural attaché of the Embassy of the United Arab Republic in Indonesia, Dr Mohammed Mahmoud Ridwan (1962), several Egyptian films were circulating and being shown in both commercial theatres and at the Cultural Centre of the United Arab Republic Embassy in Jakarta itself. In his notes about films circulating during the 1950s, Ridwan finds that Egyptian films were among the imports Indonesians watched. Since the 1930s, in fact, according to Hamka (1952:128-31), Egyptian movies were being shown in Indonesia.

The difference between the reception of films from Egypt compared to that of literature, however, was that Egyptian movies had a bad name. Hamka, for example, thought that Egyptian movies were of extremely low quality and full of obscenity, even though they had been cut here and there by the Board of Censors. 'Ten times worse than dance films from America', he wrote (Hamka 1952:130). Because of his concern about the obscenity issue, Hamka admitted that he once sent an article to an Egyptian magazine in which he explained what a bad impression Egyptian films of this type were making on the Indonesian public.[40]

When he visited Egypt for the first time in 1950, Hamka had another opportunity to watch Egyptian movies. His impression didn't change a bit: Egyptian films were worthless and 'dirty', not fit to be shown in first-class theatres, but only in second- or third-class ones. This time Hamka sent a letter of concern to the Egyptian Minister for Education and Culture. 'Egypt should improve the quality of its films because Egypt is still honoured as the "centre" of the Islamic revival in modern times', he wrote.

While Hamka praised Egyptian literature to the skies, he felt nothing but contempt for Egyptian films. Usmar formed exactly the same impression during his visit to Egypt. It is thus impossible that Usmar would develop a new interest in Egyptian movies on purely aesthetic grounds.

39 I encountered this name in a book by Aboebakar Atjeh (1957:259). Lubis was mentioned as being a friend of Djamaluddin Malik.

40 A similar view was expressed by Abu Ubaidah (pen name of Moh. Dimyati) who wrote a weekly column, 'Dari sahabat ke sahabat' (From one friend to another) for the magazine *Hikmah*. According to him, '*Film-film Mesir yang di-impor ke Indonesia 80% film tjabul yang kadang-kadang lebih tjabul dari film Hollywood*' (80% of Egyptian films imported to Indonesia are obscene and sometimes more so than Hollywood movies (Abu Ubaidah 1952:21). According to Hamka (1952:130), Rosihan Anwar, writing for the daily *Pedoman*, also thoroughly criticized the quality of Egyptian films. As a reporter for that paper, Rosihan visited Egypt in 1952 and wrote extensively about that country, as shown by the many articles on the subject appearing in *Gema Islam*.

In any case, Usmar's visit to Egypt was an early sign of his political shift to Islam. This shift led to his involvement with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), particularly via his support for its cultural affiliate, The Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures (Lembaga Seniman Budajawan Muslim Indonesia, LESBUMI) in 1962. It appears that Djamaluddin Malik, Director of the Indonesian Artists Inc. (PERSARI), Usmar's friend but also competitor in the making of movies, played a role in recruiting Usmar to the Islamic cultural cause.[41]

But it is clear that this was not an easy choice for Usmar. From the beginning of his artistic career, Usmar preferred to be a free agent without any kind of political allegiance. He loved his profession of artist. In this he differed from his two friends Rosihan Anwar and Abu Hanifah who had together founded the theatre group Maya. Usmar didn't join Rosihan Anwar in devoting himself to the world of journalism, even though he had earlier distinguished himself as a journalist. But because he wanted to pour himself into his artistic activities, he resigned his chairmanship of the Indonesian Journalists Association (Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia, PWI) in February 1947 after nine months (Soebagijo I.N. 1981:549-53). He was also not tempted to follow in the footsteps of his friend and older brother Abu Hanifah, who joined Masjumi and went on to have a career as a diplomat.[42] Yet, times had changed and were forcing him to choose: he turned toward Islam.

Usmar's idea of making a movie in cooperation with the Egyptian company Magda Film never came to fruition. Negotiations failed over the issue of the story, according to him. The plan to show *Djamila Bouhired* in Indonesia went ahead, although three years behind schedule. The important thing was that, in the case of this film, Usmar was able to showcase an Egyptian movie of quality.[43]

41 Supporters of both Usmar Ismail and Djamaluddin Malik called them the '*dwi tunggal*' (duumvirate) of the national film industry. On their relationship, see Ramadhan K.H. and Nina Pane 2006:115-50.

42 On Abu Hanifah, see Ohorella 1985.

43 The premier of this film was shown by the Board of Al-Jami'atul Washlijah at the Carya movie theatre, Jalan Gunung Sahari, Jakarta, on 4 May 1962 at 7 pm. It was stated in the newspaper announcement of the premier, which filled the full back page of the edition of *Gema Islam* for 1 May 1962 together with a black-and-white portrait of the beautiful Magda dressed as the revolutionary fighter Djamila Bouhired, that the net profit from ticket sales would be donated to orphans receiving Al-Washlijah assistance and to the construction of Al-Washlijah University. Also mentioned were the organizers of the opening night: Letkol H. Baharuddin Ali, H. Djafar Zainuddin, Kapten Yunan Helmy Nasution, Nj. Iskandar Ishak, and Nj. A. Hamzah Nasution. Both Usmar and Rosihan were instrumental in promoting the movie. It should be noted that in addition to being a director and movie producer, Usmar, working through Perfini, had become a film importer, as A. Rahim Latief has pointed out in Ramadhan K.H. and Nina Pane 2006:154-6.

It was with the government of Saudi Arabia that Usmar did in fact cooperate in producing a film. With the sponsorship of LESBUMI, Usmar participated in making the film *Tauhid* (Unity) in 1964, shot in Mecca.[44] *Tauhid* had an Islamic theme, but it also expressed the revolutionary ethos of the time, as requested by President Soekarno. In remarks at the ceremony in honour of his departure for Mecca, Usmar expressed the hope that the film he was about to make would 'fulfil the President's expectation that it would make a positive contribution to furthering the Indonesian revolution' (Usmar Ismail 1964). In the Islamic context, the film had to reflect the 'flame of Islam', to use an expression taken from the book by Syed Ameer Ali that Soekarno was always quoting. Asrul Sani wrote and directed the film, which was produced by Djamaluddin Malik, with Usmar serving as technical advisor.

Tauhid was made with financial support from the Departments of Religion and Information. Salim Said (1993:80) writes that it was part of a government plan to produce 50 Indonesian films a year, with government-owned banks and companies to provide support to the movie industry. Such government assistance came at a price: the final products naturally reflected the government's views.[45]

It is noteworthy that the Minister of Religion at this time was K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, while the Indonesian ambassador to Saudi Arabia was K.H.M. Ilyas, Saifuddin's predecessor as Minister of Religion; both were leading figures in NU.[46] As Misbach Yusa Biran, who was the assistant director for the film, has written in detail in his memoirs, it is hardly surprising that the facilities provided to the film crew were more than satisfactory (Misbach Yusa Biran 2008:181-6).Three of the production vehicles had official Saudi plates, which meant they could go anywhere. Filming could take place freely anywhere at all. Misbach also observed the ease with which Djamaluddin Malik and Usmar Ismail went in and out of the Indonesian embassy in Saudi Arabia.

44 The title of the film was sometimes called *Panggilan tanah sutji* (The call of the holy land) or *Panggilan Nabi Ibrahim* (The call of the prophet Ibrahim). Asrul Sani wanted to title the film *Tjatatan seorang musafir* (Notes of a wanderer).

45 Apart from *Tauhid* there were many other films that were made as joint government-private ventures. *Tauhid* has received the most attention, however, because of the involvement of leading figures from the film industry as well as the Saudi government.

46 According to Saifuddin Zuhri (1986:518-9), *Tauhid* was made at the initiative of these two men, with the agreement of Djamaluddin Malik and Usmar Ismail. In conjunction with *Tauhid*, Misbach Yusa Biran made an instructional film on the *haj*.

Official Saudi support, in the form of permission to film almost everywhere, was indeed remarkable. Saudi Arabia was the most puritanical Islamic nation at this time, banning all forms of artistic expression. In his press release about the making of *Tauhid*, Asrul Sani talked about the difficulty of arranging for filming at the Masjid Haram in Mecca and the Masjid Nabawi in Medina. 'Part of the filming that had to be made at the two mosques could not take place', he said, 'because certain Saudi officials were afraid that this would cause a stir in some religious circles.'[47] Yet the fact that any kind of permission was obtained at all is interesting and significant, since Saudi Arabia regarded Indonesia as a country that leaned too far to the side of the communist bloc.[48]

Tauhid would have been made in 1963 but filming was postponed until the following year because of problems with obtaining permissions in Indonesia. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Usmar Ismail whose relations with artists on the Left were getting worse and worse at this time.[49] 1964 was the year of the third Afro-Asian film festival, held in Jakarta, for which the Indonesian organizing committee and delegation were dominated by the Left. Usmar and Asrul Sani intentionally went to Mecca to make *Tauhid* and thereby avoid attending the film festival.

Tauhid, along with *Anak-anak revolusi* (Children of the revolution, directed by Usmar Ismail) were later shown as the Indonesian entries for the film festival that took place in Jakarta as part of the first conference on Afro-Asian Islam in 1965. A number of other films from Islamic nations participating in this conference, such as the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Algeria, Pakistan, Syria, Lebanon, and others, were also shown in first-class movie theatres in Bandung and Jakarta during the festival (*Gema K.I.A.A* 1965).

47 *Antara* 12-5-64, as quoted in 'Kronik' *Gema Islam* (3-51 (1 June1964):4). It is worth noting that two years earlier the National Directorate of Film (DPN) sent two filmmakers, Amura and Djohardin, to Saudi Arabia to make a documentary entitled *Perbaikan perdjalanan hadji 1963* (Improvements to making the *haj* in 1963). The film was completed 'thanks to assistance from the government of Saudi Arabia in the form of every kind of facility and personnel, together with the staff of our embassy'. See the review of this film by Indonesia O'Galelano 1964.

48 Mohamad Ilyas, Indonesian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Oman at this time, often encountered serious difficulties because of Saudi views regarding Indonesia's Left-leaning tendencies, while at the same time Indonesia saw Saudi Arabia as being reactionary. See Saifullah Ma'shum 1994.

49 To a certain degree, this conflict opened up personal problems. Read the debate between Usmar Ismail and Sitor Situmorang in Taufik Ismail and D.S. Moeljanto 1995.

According to Misbach Yusa Biran, *Tauhid* was heavy going for the average moviegoer, with the result that it was not widely shown. An additional problem was that 1965 was a year of non-stop political turbulence, with an evening curfew imposed at 6 pm.[50]

Perhaps the significance of the film, however, lies not just in the final product, but in the networking process by which it was created. Within Indonesia this creative network involved cooperation between Muslim artists and cultural leaders; abroad, it extended out to include the government of Saudi Arabia.[51] At the very least the film was useful in once again introducing the world of film to Muslim social groups. The collaboration with Saudi Arabia established a precedent that has yet to be repeated.

BAHRUM RANGKUTI: PROMOTING IQBAL FROM PAKISTAN

When Hamka made his pilgrimage to Arab countries in 1950, he visited Karachi, Pakistan on the way. There he met up with Bahrum Rangkuti, a young Muslim writer who was at that time cultural attaché at the Indonesian embassy in Karachi.

Bahrum was born on 7 August 1919 in Galang, Riau and was known as a poet, short-story writer, and dramatist. Since the 1930s his work had been appearing in *Pandji Poestaka*, *Pantja Raja*, *Gema Suasana*, *Indonesia* and *Poedjangga Baroe*. He also translated Sophocles's *Antigone* (1948) and works by Alexander Pushkin (1949). To his friends and acquaintances he was known as a cosmopolitan man who had mastered nine languages: English, French, German, Dutch, Arabic, Farsi, Javanese, as well as his local dialect (Jakob Oetama 1963).

That being the case, what was his connection to Pakistan? Pakistan was a new nation but an old people with an ancient tradition and history. Pakistan's culture was a synthesis of world cultures: Persian, Arab, Greek, not to mention Indian, all of which arrived as a result of economic, political, and religious factors. Pakistan possessed a rich cultural heritage that was visible in its literature,

50 Email message from Misbach Yusa Biran, 7-2-2009.

51 According to Misbach Yusa Biran (2008:214) the film-making network also included several members of HSBI. The farewell party for the film crew at Djamaluddin Malik's house before the departure for Saudi Arabia was attended by many groups of Muslim artists and cultural figures. Usmar Ismail was said to have exclaimed with emotion: 'Never before has there been such a tightly knit group of Muslims in the cultural field.'

Bahrum Rangkuti (left) with H.B. Jassin, 1952. (Pusat Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin)

music, and architecture. Its traditions of Islamic thought, expressed through the Urdu and Farsi languages, were rich and different from that of the Middle East.

When Pakistan was still part of India, its Islamic identity was not apparent in an international sense, obscured by the dominant Hindu Indic cast of the national culture. But once it had broken away to form its own nation-state, Pakistan's Islamic identity, which had developed in the region of Bengal, burst forth. Pakistan backed Indonesia in its struggle against the Dutch in 1948-1949, forbidding Dutch ships and aircraft from landing in Pakistan. In 1951, Pakistan hosted the Third World Muslim Conference, a gathering that had not been held since before World War II. In that same year, Indonesia and Pakistan signed an official agreement of cooperation (Ahmed Ali 1951; Amal Hamzah 1952).

All of these reasons underlay Pakistan's relations with Indonesia. Natsir made his visit to Pakistan in 1952 a top priority, second only to a trip to Egypt.[52] In April 1954, the magazine *Hikmah* sent its reporter Adnan Syamni to Pakistan to write an exclusive on the development of Islam in that country (Adnan Syamni 1954). It is not surprising that Hamka made periodic visits to Karachi from this period onward or that Bahrum spent a year in Pakistan for study and spiritual retreat.

52 Natsir's speech in Karachi was published in serial form in *Hikmah* 5-20, 21, 22, 23, and 25, (17, 23, and 31 May 1952 and 7 and 14 June 1952). This was of course not the first Indonesian contact with Pakistan. Religious connections, especially in Ahmadiyya circles, existed since the 1920s. See Iskandar Zulkarnain 2005.

In his first of several reflections on Pakistan written during the year he spent in the 'land of the crescent moon' (as he called it) and published in successive issues of the magazine *Zenith*, Bahrum touches on his meeting with Hamka and discusses his astonished impressions of Pakistani film:

> Speaking of Pakistani film, this offers a truly unusual picture of life to the inhabitants of Karachi and Lahore. Each of these cities has scores of cinemas and (Dear Reader, don't be shocked!) every film runs for months at a time. It is not unusual for movies like *Mahl* (Palace) and *Suraiyya* to be shown for 56 weeks at the Nishad theatre in Karachi [,] a period of time that is named accordingly: 'The Golden 56th Week'. At first I was rather puzzled by the fact that any film would be shown this long in movie theatres in Pakistan, no matter how good it was. Then I went to see *Mahl* for myself, a film starring Madhubala and Ashok Kumar.
>
> Wonderful and beautiful! There are not many Asian films that can express beauty and approach the status of literature like this one. Astonishing that a country that, by Indonesian standards, does not allow women their freedom has succeeded in producing women actors who are exceedingly uninhibited and pleasing in their manner of acting and movement. Every character that is performed, each personality that struggles within itself or against others, the aesthetic atmosphere, and the level of religious and philosophical observation are underwritten by an ancient Indian story, and all of this is assembled by means of good directing and clean visual and sound recording, by means of which the natural and spiritual elements in the film give rise to a feeling of 'respect', making me rather jealous of the successes of films from Pakistan and the West, compared to my memories of Indonesian movies.[53]

53 Ngomong-ngomong tentang pilem Pakistani, memang gambar hidup salah satu keluarbiasaan bagi penduduk Karachi dan Lahore. Setiap kota ini berpuluh-puluh cinemanja dan (djangan terkedjut para pembatja!) setiap pilem lamanja diputarkan berbulan-bulan lamanja. Bukan suatu keanehan kalau pilem sebagai *Mahl* (Istana) dan *Suraiyya* berputar sampai 56 minggu dibioskop Nishad di Karachi sehingga peristiwa begitu disebutkan dengan nama; The Golden 56th Week. Mula-mulanja aku merasa heran djuga, apa sebabnja sesuatu pilem begitu lama diputarkan dibioskop-bioskop di Pakistan, walaupun bagaimana bagusnja pilem itu. Lalu aku sendiri pergilah melihatnja, jakni pilem *Mahl* jang ditafsirkan oleh bintang pilem Madhubala dan Ashok Kumar. Adjaib dan indah! Tidak banjak pilem Timur jang dapat menjatakan keindahan dan mendekati kesusasteraan begini. Adjaib, bahwa negeri, dimana – menurut ukuran Indonesia – tak ada kebebasan kaum wanita dapat menghasilkan pemain2 pilem wanita jang amat lepas dan sedap gaja main dan gerak-geriknja. Watak demi watak jang diperlakukan, pribadi demi pribadi jang berdjuang kedalam batinnja dan keluar, rasa aestetika, nilai2 agama dan tindjauan falsafat, didukung oleh kissah India purba, semuanja ini dengan regi jang baik dan sound-technik beserta opname jang terang, dimana suara anasir-anasir alam-njata dan alam-rohani menimbulkan rasa "ontzag", membuat aku agak tjemburu kepada hasil2 pilem di Pakistan dan Bharat, djika aku teringat kepada pilem2 Indonesia. (Bahrum Rangkuti 1951a:229.)

It is uncertain how extensive Bahrum's knowledge of film around the world was, allowing him to praise films in Pakistan to this extent. But at the very least he was knowledgeable about the history of Indonesian film, in comparison with which Pakistani movies appeared to be of higher quality.

It was only in 1950, at least according to the 'official film history' that the first real Indonesian film, namely Usmar Ismail's *Darah dan doa*, (The Long March) was in the process of being made. This movie received accolades primarily because it was the first time that a film made explicit reference to national events that involved the fate of the entire Indonesian people. But even though Usmar is described as the pioneer of a new generation of Indonesian filmmakers who joined the world of film with more artistic awareness than ever before, it remains true that these early films are considered to fall short of achieving the same aesthetic standards as those found in literature from the same period. It is interesting that Bahrum was struck by the beauty of Pakistani movies, which he felt had achieved the status of literature.[54] In his account of his visit to Pakistan he describes watching the movie *Madhubala* with Hamka, who was only able to exclaim '*masya Allah*' (Good heavens!), amazed as he was at the beauty and music of the film. Bahrum published his account in the pages of *Zenith*, a prestigious cultural journal of that period. Unfortunately, Bahrum's writing seems to have no influence on the world of film in general at that time.[55]

Indeed, Bahrum's main interest during his year-long visit to Pakistan lay elsewhere. In many respects he was most absorbed in the realm of cultural ideas. Before he joined the staff of the Indonesian cultural attaché in Karachi, he was in fact, as he put it, 'washed ashore' in Rabwah, (then) a small village on the banks of the Chenab River in Punjab founded by the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in 1948 as a training site for Muslim missionaries. Bahrum described the location as 'a sandy wasteland, circled by rocky

54 Before Partition (1947), Mumbai (formerly Bombay) was the filmmaking capital of the region, with only a few studios located in Lahore (now the capital of the Pakistani state of Punjab and the second largest city in Pakistan). Many of these studios collapsed in 1947, and film production in the ensuing years was minimal: 1948 (1 film), 1949 (6 films), 1950 (13 films), and 1955 (24 films); see 'Film Pakistan', *Hikmah*, Lebaran issue (1 May 1957):38. Pakistani films, like films from Egypt, were imported into Indonesia at this time, though in a lesser number. For a photo of the Pakistani film actor Mussarat Nazir, see *Pandji Masjarakat* 5-1 (15 April 1959):10. Unlike Egyptian movies, in general Pakistani films were considered to be respectable and of good quality, according to Amura (1962:8) 'Not all the dance films were improper or spiced up with sexual elements. For example, films from ... Pakistan'.

55 Together with his article are reproductions of paintings from two Pakistani artists, Zubeida Agha and Zainal Abidin, together with a photograph of a Kasmir women's dance. No explanation is given about this, but probably these pictures were supplied by Bahrum himself.

mountains without names. Here life is extremely simple. There are no urban services and accommodation, and visitors arrive in droves, squeezing into every corner. There are only 212 inhabitants. The houses are made out of mud that has been dried in the sun [...] and the lighting consists of candles and hanging lamps.'[56]

The school, rather like a *pesantren*, in Rabwah was called *Jamiatul Mubasheren*, established to train Ahmadiyya missionaries from all corners of the world. But Bahrum himself did not want to become a missionary. His own memories of the school dwelt on its library with its rich collection of poetry, Hadith, commentaries, theological treatises, and classical philosophical works by Islamic authors like Sa'adi. Omar Khayyam, Shibili, Al-Biruni, Ibnu Sina, and others. The library also contained Western philosophical writings by such thinkers as Kant and Nietzsche, histories of Europe, as well as the latest magazines and journals. Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrullah Khan (1893-1985), a leading Ahmadi Muslim and Pakistan's first Foreign Minister (1947-1954), studied at this school and visited there twice during Bahrum's stay in Rabwah. Bahrum remembers being impressed by Zafrullah's knowledge, piety, intelligence and self-discipline.[57]

Bahrum's journey to Pakistan was an important intellectual and spiritual pilgrimage for him, especially the six months he spent in Rabwah. There he immersed himself in books on philosophy, literature, and religion that filled him with inspiration. In his account of the journey, which he wrote in the form of letters addressed to a friend he called 'Bung' (brother, mate, comrade), he wrote about ideas, Western, Indian, as well as Islamic. The important aspect of this exposition is the feeling of dialogue and encounter it conveys, of give and take, of mutually confronting influences between these three traditions and ways of thinking. It was emphatically the case that, in Bahrum's view, Islam in Indonesia had to mine Muslim intellectual traditions to the fullest extent in order to acquire the resources for achieving modernity. Of the thinkers he studied and discussed, none

56 According to Bahrum there was one other Indonesian in Rabwah at the time, namely Supardja, the director of Neratja Trading Co., who arrived in Rabwah to gather materials for a new publication about Islam as well as do business. It is worth noting that Rabwah later became the world headquarters of the Ahmadiyya movement, before they were moved to London.

57 Zafrullah Khan was an extremely popular Pakistani foreign minister and diplomat. As Pakistan's representative to the Security Council of the UN in 1948-1954 (he was Pakistan's Permanent Representative in 1961-1964 and President of the UN General Assembly in 1962-1964), he advocated independence for many occupied countries around the world, including Indonesia, and was a supporter of universal human rights (he served on the International Court of Justice in the Hague 1954-1961). Pakistan joined Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey as the only Muslim countries that voted for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

was more fascinating to him than Muhammad Iqbal, the poet known as the 'spiritual father of Pakistan'. In the second letter addressed to 'Bung', Bahrum compares Zafrullah Khan and Muhammad Iqbal:

> Bung, I think that Iqbal has a more objective attitude to Islam than even Zafrullah. Both of them are right in what they say about appraising and studying other cultures. But Zafrullah is 'dogmatic' about the truth of his Islamic conception of things, whereas Iqbal's attitude is one of 'independent-mindedness and respect', although this could be called a kind of dogma. Maybe it is clearer to put it this way: Zafrullah is no longer seeking for something; in the language of the arts, he has already '*arrived*', whereas Iqbal still wants to keep searching.[58]

Transposed to an Indonesian context, in Bahrum's eyes, Zafrullah and Iqbal stand for Hamka and Takdir Alisjahbana in their manner of evaluating Islam and Islamic culture.[59]

> The difference between the visions of Iqbal and Takdir and the outcomes of their ideals is also of interest. Both men urged Asians to 'inhale the spirit of the West' or to 'absorb the lessons of practical Islam' (Takdir) or to 'approach modern knowledge with an independent mind' (Iqbal). Both of these Asian thinkers arrived at these formulations through their searching readings of Western philosophy.[60]

It is important to underline the importance of Bahrum's observations here. In these years Muslim countries had just freed themselves from the grip of Western colonialism. As newly independent countries made their appearance, nationalizing movements grew apace. As a result, most Muslims in these countries felt antipathy to everything that derived from their former colonial masters. They

58 Bung, aku berpendapat bahwa Iqbal lebih objektif sikapnja terhadap Islam dari pada Zafrullah sendiri. Kedua-dua mereka benar dalam menjatakan supaja menilai dan menelaah kebudajaan2 lainnja: hanja Zafrullah 'mendogma' kepada benarnja tjita Islam, sedangkan Iqbal hanjalah, sikap yang 'merdeka dan terhormat' kalaupun ini bisa disebutkan dogma. Atau barangkali lebih terang lagi; Zafrullah tidak mentjari lagi; dalam istilah seni, dia sudah 'arrive', sedang Iqbal masih mau mentjari. (Bahrum Rangkuti 1951b:286.)

59 Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana was the best known figure in the cultural debates in Indonesia during the 1930s. He advocated the wholesale exploitation of Western ideas in order to modernize Indonesia. See Achdiat K. Mihardja 1954.

60 Menarik hati pula perbedaan visi dan hasil visi ini antara Iqbal dan Takdir. Kedua-dua mereka ini menjerukan kepada bangsa Timur supaja 'menghisap roh Barat' atau 'roh Islam jang nuchter' (Takdir) atau 'menghampiri ilmu pengetahuan modern dengan sikap jang merdeka' (Iqbal). Kedua ahli pikir 'Timur' ini sampai kepada utjapan diatas oleh telaah mereka jang dalam tentang falsafat Barat (Bahrum Rangkuti 1951b:287).

sought to purge and cast aside everything that was 'colonial'. Excessive feelings of this sort stuck to the body and soul of the new nation.

It can be immediately understood from the quoted passages above how important Iqbal's position was in the realm of Islamic cultural thinking at this time. Against the tide of anti-colonial euphoria that conflated everything 'colonial' with everything 'Western', Iqbal pushed for the investigation of and immersion in Western thought in a clear-sighted and independent-minded way. He opposed moving away from and abandoning such an effort.

Bahrum supported Iqbal's position at the right moment in time, just as Muslims drunk on newly won freedom rejected everything they thought was colonial. Through the translations and studies of Iqbal's work that poured forth in journals like *Zenith*, *Indonesia*, *Hikmah*, *Pandji Masjarakat*, and *Gema Islam* during the 1950s, Iqbal attained popularity in Indonesia. He was frequently cited by leading Indonesian intellectuals of the period.

Bahrum's enthusiasm for introducing Iqbal to a wider audience grew even stronger in 1953 when, in collaboration with Arif Husain, he translated one of Iqbal's important works, *Asrar-i Khudi* (Personal secrets, the Indonesian title was *Rahasia-rahasia pribadi*). Moh. Natsir wrote an afterword and Bahrum provided a 71-page foreword that explained how he acquired a copy of the work and the importance of this '*oleh-oleh*' (souvenir) from his trip to Pakistan:

> I obtained a copy of the original text in Farsi when I was in Lahore in 1950, when I was studying with Prof. Abdul Qador MA, Professor of Arabic and Farsi at Djami'atul Mubashereen, Rabwah. I learned a great deal about Iqbal's poetry from him.[61]

Asrar-i Khudi was written in verse in the manner of Jalal ad-Din Rumi's thirteenth-century Persian-language *Mathnawi* and published in 1915. The poems contain Iqbal's teachings about the self and the struggle for existence. He also accuses the Sufis of living a life of excessive comfort and isolation. *Asrar-i Khudi* urges its readers to work hard and improve themselves.[62]

61 Saja sendiri mendapat teks aslinja, jakni bahasa Farsi, di Lahore dalam tahun 1950, waktu saja mendjadi murid dari Prof. Abdul Qadir M.A. Mahaguru bahasa Arab dan Farsi di Djami'atul Mubashereen, Rabwah. Daripadanja banjak saja peroleh pengertian tentang sjair2 Iqbal (Bahrum Rangkuti 1953:13).

62 The year 1915 indicates the belatedness of the introduction of Iqbal's work to Indonesia. Rabindranath Tagore, for example, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature for 1913, was Iqbal's contemporary, but his work had already begun appearing in Indonesia in the 1940s in translations by Anas Ma'ruf and Amal Hamzah, among others. The founding of an independent Pakistan in 1947 served to bring Iqbal's isolation to an end.

Iqbal was Pakistan's spiritual father who helped blaze the trail of the country's independence. He was a hero. Iqbal's poem 'Muslim brotherhood', for example, was made the official song of the Muktamar Alam Islami in Karachi in 1951.[63] In the 1950s and early 1960s the Pakistani embassy in Jakarta often celebrated 'Iqbal Day' on 22 February. These events usually featured poetry-reading contests of Iqbal's work and performances from Pakistan.[64]

In reality Iqbal did not belong to Pakistan alone. For Muslim intellectuals and artists in Indonesia he was the prototype of the ideal cultural figure who integrated Western philosophy with mastery of the Quran, Hadith, and the entire intellectual and spiritual tradition of Islam. He embodied the energy and intellectual dynamism of Islam; he was the Kant, Nietzsche, Goethe, and Fichte of the Muslim world, all wrapped up into one.[65] In this, Iqbal mirrored in himself the Islamic philosophers of the past: Ibnu 'Arabi, Ibnu Sina, and others. The attention Iqbal drew to his own work stimulated interest in Western thought, a necessarily circuitous path of intellectual inquiry.[66]

On the other hand, Iqbal was known in Muslim activist circles as someone with political views tending toward socialism. As someone who grew up just as colonialism reached the height of its power, he knew from personal experience what it felt like to be 'colonized'. He could feel sympathy for communism as an expression of the struggle against colonialism and imperialism.[67] With the world divided in an ideological sense into left and right, there was a widespread impulse to search for other alternatives. The Islamic world, with its socialist tendencies at that time, participated in this quest. Indonesia, Egypt, and Pakistan were Muslim countries that were also, in one way or another, socialist. Iqbal's socialism was a God-fearing socialism. His famous saying was: 'Bolshevism plus God almost equals Islam'. Thus Iqbal was central to the search for a third way. It is hardly surprising that Iqbal was the most quoted and excerpted author in Indonesian Muslim publications during this

63 A translation of this poem by Hamka can be found in *Hikmah*, Lebaran issue (1 May 1957):13.

64 At the celebration in honour of Iqbal in 1954 at the Hotel des Indes, Natsir read his poem '*Sikwa-Jawabi Sikwa*' in a translation by Hamka. This poem can be found in *Pandji Masjarakat* (see Muh. Iqbal 1959). For the celebration of Iqbal in 1958, the leader of Masjumi, Prawoto Mangkusasmito gave an address titled 'Iqbal's mission and ideals in the struggle for Islam in Indonesia', later published in *Hikmah*. See Prawoto Mangkusasmito 1958.

65 It was said that Iqbal was much influenced by these philosophers.

66 See, for example, Mumtaz Hasan (1960), 'Goethe and the East'. Mumtaz was inspired to write this piece because of Iqbal's 'spiritual-intellectual' link with Goethe.

67 One of the best known poems from *Asrar-i Khudi* is '*Lenin di depan Tuhan*' (Lenin before God), a lyric poem that alternates between interest in, disregard for, praise, and mockery of Lenin's communism.

period.[68] It can be said that Iqbal was the connecting link between Islam in Indonesia and Islam in Pakistan.[69] Most of the commentary on Iqbal was based on Bahrum Rangkuti's translation of and long introduction to *Asrar-i Khudi*. Throughout the 1950s and after, Bahrum was Iqbal's main interpreter in Indonesia.[70]

Bachrum subsequently became head of the Muslim pastoral service of the Indonesian navy with the rank of captain. He also fostered the development of the magazine *Gema Islam* and ended his career as Secretary-General of the Department of Religion under A. Mukti Ali (1971-1977).[71] Apart from being well known as a writer and commentator on literature, he also wrote frequently on topics having to do with Pakistan.[72] What he never forgot was the year he spent studying in Pakistan, which made a deep mark on Islam and culture in Indonesia. This was the trace of Muhammad Iqbal's presence in Indonesia.

68 See, for example, Kasim Mansoer (1956) in 'Muhammad Iqbal'; Rusdy Toana (1958) in 'Dr. Mohammad Iqbal'; N.M. Sutan Maricar (1960) in 'Iqbal; Penyair Internasional'; Abdullah Anwar Beg (1962) in 'Dr. Muhammad Iqbal di tengah Failasuf Islam dan Barat' (summary by Yusuf Abdullah Puar); and a comic strip about Iqbal by C. Israr that appeared in *Gema Islam* 4-68 (15 February 1965):33.

69 It is also important to take note of the speech by Iqbal collected in *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam* which was published in two versions translated by Ali Audah, Goenawan Mohamad, and Taufik Ismail (Iqbal 1966a) and Osman Raliby (Iqbal 1966b). Iqbal's magnum opus, *Javid Nama*, did not appear in Indonesian until 1987. There is an indirect connection between this translation and Bahrum. In his introduction, the translator Mohamad Sadikin writes: 'I caught sight of him [Bahrum] at TIM in 1974 at an occasion in honour of Iqbal. The first work by Iqbal that I came to know was his *Rahasia-rahasia pribadi* , the translation of [...] *Asrar-i Khudi*. Later [...] I asked Bahrum when he was going to translate the *Javid Namah*?' Apparently Bahrum had wanted to translate this work for some time, but had been too busy with other things to do so. Not long after this conversation, Bahrum passed away. The Indonesian translation by Mohamad Sadikin (1987) is based on translations in French and English, rather than the original Persian, as Bahrum would have wanted.

70 Bahrum's journey to Pakistan is often interpreted as an indication of his adherence to Ahmadiyya. Several members of Ahmadiyya still remember him as a follower of that sect. According to Djohan Effendi, Bahrum belonged to Ahmadiyya for a period of time, then left the sect (interview with Djohan Effendi, January 2009). Djohan Effendi, who served in the Department of Religion and as a cabinet secretary in the Abdurrahman Wahid period, is a Muslim intellectual and admirer of Iqbal. He has translated three books about Iqbal (see Bilgrami 1979; Maitre 1981; Djohan Effendi 1986). Djohan was on good terms with Bahrum and stayed him during his first visit to Jakarta in the early 1970s.

71 A. Mukti Ali was a member of the editorial board of *Gema Islam* and had been a student in the Department of Arabic Literature at the University of Karachi from 1951 to 1955. Like Hamka, Mukti wanted initially to study in Mecca, but Imron Rosyadi, Indonesian embassy consul in charge of the *haj*, advised him to go to Egypt because the influence of the Wahabis was too great to allow for the disinterested pursuit of knowledge (see Abdurrahman 1993). In the end Mukti chose Pakistan. Apart from the fact that friends of Imron Rosyadi were there, Mukti was drawn to the ideas of Muhammad Iqbal (information obtained from Martin van Bruinessen, 27 February 2009).

72 Apart from his visits to Pakistan, Bahrum also obtained copies of the latest books and publications about Pakistan from his friend Arif Husain, who was on the staff of the Pakistani Embassy in Jakarta and an expert in Persian.

CONCLUSION

In 1950, Asrul Sani and his friends proclaimed the Gelanggang Testimonial of Beliefs (Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang), a succinct document brimming with vitality. Its contents set forth the certitude of their belief in themselves as members of 'the legitimate heirs to world culture'. It was a resonant claim to open Indonesian culture to the world. 'The culture of Indonesia is established by the coming together of clamorous voices spurred by voices hurled from every corner of the world […]', in the words of the Testimonial.[73]

To locate the cultural journeys, quests, and struggles in Egypt and Pakistan of the three Muslim intellectuals we have been examining on a continuum with the ideas expressed by the Gelanggang Testimonial is not to misrepresent them. It can be said in fact that the acts and ideas of these three men represent a concrete response to the directives and challenges of this text. Travelling to two Muslim countries can be seen as an enactment of the decision to search for and seize hold of those 'voices hurled from every corner of the world'.

In an editorial titled '*Kebudajaan Arab atau kebudajaan Islam*' (Arab culture or Muslim culture), Hamka (1960) responded to the charge that the magazine *Pandji Masjarakat* was promoting Arab culture. While conceding that this was true, Hamka turned the argument on its head. If every element of culture from around the world, be it from India, Europe, Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, or even communist for that matter, could be said to be contributing to the formation of the 'national culture' of Indonesia, why not Arab culture, why not Islam? Hamka's question seems to echo once again the words of the Gelanggang Testimonial quoted above.

But what kind of 'Islam' would be the most appropriate and helpful in this process? Hamka, Usmar, and Bahrum were all convinced that it would be the modern and progressive Islam that placed value and importance on scientific knowledge. It was this culture of Islam that they sought to introduce through their essays, films, and literary translations. It was in Egypt and Pakistan, it is important to stress, that they discovered the kind of modern, progressive, and enlightened Islam that could best contribute to the development of an independent and modern Indonesia.

Translated from Indonesian by Tony Day

73 '*Kebudayaan Indonesia ditetapkan oleh kesatuan berbagai-bagai rangsang suara yang disebabkan suara-suara yang dilontarkan dari segala sudut dunia* [...]'. See the reprint of the entire text in Asrul Sani 1997:3-4. An English translation of the text can be found in Teeuw 1986:127.

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5

Honoured guests
Indonesian-American cultural traffic, 1953-1957

Tony Day

In March 1956, the head of the United States Information Agency (USIA, known outside the United States as USIS, United States Information Service) reported to the US Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs that the dancer Martha Graham and her company, recently returned from their 1955-1956 tour of Asia, had taken Jakarta by storm. According to the Jakarta press, Theodore Streibert[1] boasted, 'Miss Graham has dispelled the prevalent notion that Americans live in a cultural wasteland peopled only with gadgets and frankfurters and atom bombs' (quoted in Prevots 1998:50). An American Embassy summary of Indonesian press reports sent to Washington conveyed the conviction that 'Graham touched the viewers' hearts and minds by subtly interpreting facets of American life: problems of materialistic society, love between persons of different ethnic origin, and the individual's opportunities in a democratic society' (Frey 2003:543).

In this essay I want to examine the nature and formation of prevalent notions about Indonesia in America and of America in Indonesia between 1953 and 1957, the years of the first Eisenhower administration (or the two Ali and the Burhanuddin cabinets). This was an important liminal period in the history of relations between the two countries. I say 'liminal' because until the intensification of efforts by the Indonesian government to defeat the regional rebellions that were receiving overt American support by early 1958, neither country had become a 'dirty word' for the other (Budiawan 2006:652; Baskara T. Wardaya 2007:213-89). Eisenhower initially pursued the policy of non-interference in Indonesian affairs he inherited from his predecessor Truman, shifting toward one involving active attempts to woo Indonesia into the American bloc, before attempting to overthrow Soekarno altogether (Baskara T. Wardaya 2007:151-209). Relations

1 Theodore Streibert headed USIA from 1953 to 1956. For a detailed discussion of his background, policies, and ideas, see Cull 2008:96-133.

and perceptions between the Third World and the First, as well as those between, and even within, the competing blocs of the Cold War, were also still very much in flux during these years.

1956 in particular was a year of uncertain direction in the evolving relationship between Indonesia and the United States. It was the year in which Khrushchev denounced Stalin; Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal; anti-Soviet uprisings occurred in Poland and Hungary; and Fidel Castro and his followers started their revolution in Cuba. Coming after the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference and the holding of Indonesia's first democratic elections in 1955 and before the political events of 1957 that led to regional rebellions backed by the CIA in an attempt to destroy Soekarno and the Communist Party, the year 1956 also witnessed a major effort by the United States to 'bring President Sukarno over to our side […] [or] at least neutralize his tremendous influence', as US Vice-President Richard Nixon put it in May 1955 (Baskara T. Wardaya 2007:179). The middle years of the 1950s in Indonesia (see Foulcher in this volume) and the United States (as we shall see) were also ones of curiosity and cultural traffic, of openness to other cultures, the pressures of the ever-sharpening differences generated by the Cold War notwithstanding.

'SOEKARNO' AND 'AMERICA' IN THE EYES OF THE OTHER

It had been the job of the USIA, a government agency established in 1953 and reporting through the National Security Council to President Eisenhower, to publicize and coordinate Graham's four performances and a lecture-demonstration in Indonesia in early December 1955.[2] With the fall of Dien Bien Phu to Vietnamese communist forces in May 1954 and heightened American fears that yet more Southeast Asian 'dominos' would fall, Graham's tour of Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan enacted an increasingly urgent American attempt to 'contain' the spread of communism in Asia through cultural means (Prevots 1998:44-50). Graham's trip was funded from the 'Emergency Fund for International Affairs', which Eisenhower had requested on 27 July 1954 in order, as he put it, to 'demonstrate the dedication of the United States to peace and human well-being [and] to offset worldwide Communist propaganda

2 According to the notice appearing in the 'Berita Kebudayaan' section of the cultural magazine *Budaya* (5-1 (January),1956:40), Graham's troupe performed the dances *Ardent song, Cave of the heart,* and *Appalachian spring* on the nights of 8, 9, and 10 December in the Gedung Kesenian, Jakarta. Graham also gave a lecture-demonstration on 6 December. She left Indonesia with her 15 dancers on 12 December.

charges that the United States has no culture [....]' (quoted in Prevots 1998: 11). The Director of USIA Streibert had already dispatched a memorandum to all USIS posts around the world on 6 July asserting that, as a result of his recent trip to Asia, he had become convinced that 'the fundamental importance and lasting quality of cultural relations' necessitated the pursuit of a cultural outreach program by the USIA that would actively present 'the culture of the people of the United States – not the culture of an elite or an intelligentsia' to the world in order to counter the Soviet threat (*Foreign relations* 1984:1773-5).

In the 1950s the USIA had 10,000 employees, mostly locals, in 217 posts in 76 countries around the world; by 1960, Southeast Asia alone had 58 USIS offices (Frey 2003:550-51). USIA operated the radio program Voice of America (VOA), which started broadcasting in Indonesian and Vietnamese in 1949. During the 1950s, the VOA Indonesian program played to between 500,000 (1955) to 794,700 (1958) radio sets for two hours a day.[3] USIA also published books and pamphlets, ran libraries, made and showed films, conducted 'exchange-of-persons' programs, and cooperated with the CIA in 'all kinds of propaganda and psychological warfare programs' (Frey 2003:550-2.). Showing films to rural populations was considered especially important. USIA produced and showed its own documentaries by means of 'mobile film units' ('small trucks equipped with film projectors, diesel generators, and screens' introduced into Indonesia in late 1950), but it also helped market Hollywood movies.[4] Marc Frey (2003:554) comments: 'USIA statistics from all the countries of Southeast Asia are indeed staggering. American officials stationed in Jakarta estimated that around 10 million Indonesians had seen a USIS film during 1953'.

Since late 1954, US policy makers in the Eisenhower administration had been of one mind about their intention to actively intervene in Indonesia in order to prevent the country from falling into the hands of communists, however wildly divergent the means that would

3 Goralski 1960:89-96. Robert Goralski (1960:95-6) gives the typical VOA Indonesian weekly program as follows: 'Sunday: "Listener's choice" (music request program); "Cultural column" (feature material on U.S. cultural developments); "Footnotes to the news" (background data on current affairs). Monday: "Announcer's choice" (music program); "Report from Indonesia" (alternates with "Report on the U.N." and "news of Hawaii"); "Press opinion" (review of U.S. press comment). Tuesday: "Magazine of the air" (feature or documentary program); "American history". Wednesday: "On the scene reporter" (documentary visits to U.S. cities); "Economic digest". Thursday: "Guest of the week" (interview with Indonesian visitor to U.S.); "Labor news". Friday: "Answers to listeners' questions"; "Developments in the world of science". Saturday: "Saturday night showcase" (popular music); "America this week" (documentary covering major news events in the U.S.)'.

4 Frey 2003:553. Nicholas Cull (2008:109) observes that by 1954, 'more than two-thirds of USIA's anti-Communist films were made in the field, with local settings and local talent'. USIS made more films in Southeast Asia than anywhere else in the world (Cull 2008:109). For more on Hollywood's role in marketing USIA films abroad, see Cull 2008:110-1.

be contemplated or employed by various officials and agencies (Baskara T. Wardaya 2007:168). Even as National Security Council staff worked during January 1955 to plan a propaganda strategy to counter expected communist influence at the upcoming Afro-Asian conference to be held in Bandung in April, the CIA was hatching a plot to disrupt the conference by assassinating Soekarno himself (Baskara T. Wardaya 2007:169-71). In Jakarta, the American Ambassador Hugh S. Cumming, Jr. (1953-1957) used exaggerated US press reports about a warming of relations between the US and Indonesia in early 1955 to nudge Soekarno away from what the Americans perceived as the growing influence of the PKI. Cumming reported to Washington that during their thirty-minute conversation on 24 February, for example, he and Soekarno spent half the time talking about Balinese painting, before moving on to the highly contentious issue of Irian, which the Americans sought to defuse by announcing, only the day before, a US $ 7 million technical assistance grant to Indonesia (*Foreign relations* 1989:138-9). The resignation of the PNI-dominated cabinet under former Ambassador to the United States Ali Sastroamidjojo on 24 July 1955 and the formation of a new, Masjumi-led cabinet hostile to the policies and corruption of the preceding government encouraged American officials to hope for more leverage in the struggle against the rise of communism in Indonesia (*Foreign relations* 1989:194-5; Feith 1962:331-461). But the results of the first-ever Indonesian parliamentary elections in September were disappointing: the (to American eyes) communist-friendly PNI, and not as the Americans had hoped, the Islamic and staunchly anti-communist Masjumi, made the stronger showing. The one clear policy conclusion to be drawn, as Ambassador Cumming put it in a telegram to the Department of State on 5 December, was that the 'elections appear to have re-confirmed Sukarno as the single most powerful and influential Indonesian political personality and have re-established in good part but not completely his position which had been steadily weakening since late 1953 [...] I believe time has come again to consider inviting him to United States particularly as he is only major non-communist SEA leader who has not been to United States' (*Foreign relations* 1989:210).

Soekarno arrived in Washington aboard Eisenhower's personal plane on 16 May 1956, accompanied by his son Moh. Guntur and number of high Indonesian officials.[5]

5 For a complete account of Soekarno's trip to the United States, Canada, Italy, West Germany, and Switzerland, 4 May-3 July, 1956, see Winoto Danoeasmoro 1956. Winoto Danoeasmoro includes quotes from newspaper notices before, during, and after the trip, texts of all Soekarno's speeches in the languages in which they were delivered, as well as many photographs. My thanks to Jennifer Lindsay for bringing Winoto Danoeasmoro's book to my attention.

Soekarno in a cowboy hat, with his son Guntur as an Indian chief, during their visit to the Grand Canyon on 29 May 1956. (Winoto Danoeasmoro 1956:109)

On the following day, Soekarno addressed both houses of Congress. After introducing himself in flawless English as 'a man born in a cottage and grown up among poor people', Soekarno went on to say:

> In our contemporary world, the impact of America is felt more and more. The influence of the American with his outlook, his ideas, his technical and scientific advances, reaches to almost every corner of Asia and Africa, whilst in America itself, Asia, the Asian and his personality, his ideals, the fruits of his labor, are gradually becoming a living reality. Americans and Indonesians are no longer strangers to each other. We know each other from the films; the beams of the radio reach into our very homes; and the magazines and daily press provoke us to think of each other. These cultural exchanges, coupled with the products of your industries and the fruits of our soil, have kept us always much closer together than the thousands of sea miles which separate our two countries. (*DSB* 1956:928.)

It is important to note Soekarno's emphasis on (what he imagined or hoped to be) the reciprocal nature of the growing cultural intimacy between Indonesians and Americans, an intimacy that USIS had already been encouraging by means of its exchange-of-persons programs, its film showings, its marketing of Hollywood movies, and its reading rooms, where visitors of all kinds, from Jakarta parliamentarians to hundreds of schoolteachers, could find American law books or student textbooks as their needs required (Frey 2003:563). In his speech, undaunted by America's overshadowing cultural might, Soekarno extolled nationalism, which he asked his audience to recognize, not as some 'out-of-date political doctrine', but as that same 'love of country and the determination to improve it' that had inspired the founders of America (*DSB* 1956:929). After a brief overview of Indonesia's struggle against colonialism, which was still continuing in the fight to regain West Irian from the Dutch, Soekarno examined Indonesia's progress in advancing the principles of democracy, an ongoing process of translating ideals into practice: 'The development of Indonesia in particular and of certain other countries of Asia in general will be the test case of the success or failure of the modern world's application of democratic principles' (*DSB* 1956:932). As for technical assistance, for which he expressed his gratitude, Soekarno stated boldly: 'We reject the idea of exchanging intellectual and spiritual independence of physical liberty for momentary advantage' (*DSB* 1956:933). In his speech to the National Press club on May 18, Soekarno tried to be even more explicit about the need for Americans to recognize that Asian and African anticolonialism and nationalism were not directed against the West (*DSB* 1956:937). He even attempted to persuade his listeners that he could discern the true goal of America's anticommunism:

> Let us look at the very basic facts of the policy of this country. What is the real object of it? The object is not the defeat of communism in the world. In your view that is a most desirable thing. But it is not the object of your policy. No, I think you would agree, and the leaders of your Nation would agree, that you are seeking a larger freedom for mankind. Communism appears to you to stand in the way of that object: therefore you oppose communism. To see the defeat of communism as the end of policy is to confuse military victory with the aims of war. (*DSB* 1956:937.)

Soekarno's speaking appearances in Washington during his three-day state visit were a huge success. In the words of the Assis-

tant Secretary of State, Walter Robertson, 'George Washington himself couldn't have made a speech that sounded better to this Congress […]' (Baskara T. Wardaya 2007:183). Soekarno's triumphant appearance before Congress was followed by a ticker-tape parade in New York City, visits to Independence Hall in Philadelphia and Abraham Lincoln's birthplace in Springfield, Illinois, an honorary degree at the University of Michigan, and tours of automobile factories, Grand Canyon, Disneyland, and Hollywood.[6]

A National Security Council document from June that year reports that the USIA 'took advantage of Sukarno's popularity and enhanced U.S. prestige' to arrange for the 'widest possible dissemination' of information about the American way of life throughout Indonesia (quoted in Hixson 1998:127). In a telegram to the State Department dated 30 June 1956, Ambassador Cumming reported that 'Sukarno's preconceived ideas on materialism US culture and militaristic overtones underwent substantial revision as result of visit'.

> Second plus value acquired was publicity which local press gave President and incidentally US by extensive coverage his trip. As reported in almost daily telegrams, presidential US reception and activities dominated all papers for more than three weeks and heavy (coverage) still continuing although now confined mostly to pictures. USIS whose output accounted for vast bulk of coverage also uncovered some new techniques which hitherto have not been available. Further benefit can be expected from exhibition of trip movies which will be running for probably next year here giving tremendous audience first hand view of US in more accurate version than is usually given movie-goers this country. (*Foreign relations* 1989:282-3.)

As things turned out, neither Soekarno nor Indonesia's commitment to a neutralist *politik bebas-aktif* was very much affected in the ways American officials hoped by the Indonesian president's trip to America. America's modest foreign aid overtures in the coming months were overshadowed by the robust offer of a US $ 100 million in credit for the purchase of military weapons from Khrushchev (Westad 2007:129). And Soekarno began conceiving a *konsepsi* for a very un-American kind of 'guided democracy' in Indonesia. He later told Cindy Adams what he remembered from the May trip:

6 See Winoto Danoeasmoro 1956:110-30 for the details of Soekarno's visit to Hollywood, including several photographs of Guntur with Roy Rodgers and the Indonesian text of a speech Soekarno delivered at a Hollywood dinner hosted by Eric Johnston, about whom more below.

'I very much like Hollywood', he told her, recalling in particular meeting Jayne Mansfield 'wearing a tight velvet sheath with very, very obviously nothing on underneath'.[7] Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and President Dwight Eisenhower? Not anywhere near so appealing: 'Later I conferred with President Eisenhower and we had an immediate nonmeeting of the minds. At the White House [where Soekarno was kept waiting in the hallway, to his fury] he could manage only to discuss our mutual love for motion pictures' (Sukarno 1965:277).

'INDONESIA' ACCORDING TO READER'S DIGEST

The concept most commonly associated with American foreign policy during the Cold War is 'containment'. But as early as 1949, well before Eisenhower's cultural outreach initiatives, American policy makers were asking the question: 'We are *against* communism, but what are we *for*'? America's mission was not simply to defeat communism: it needed to unite the world behind its goal of spreading democracy and freedom abroad (Klein 2003:38). Drawing on official pronouncements by President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles between 1953 and 1957, Christina Klein explains the ideological 'imaginary' of US foreign policy:

> Where the global imaginary of containment drew on the residual internationalism of the right, with its vision of bulwarks between nations and a mortal conflict between communism and capitalism, the global imaginary of integration drew on the residual internationalism of the left, which imagined the world in terms of open doors that superseded barriers and created pathways between nations [...] In the political rhetoric of integration, relationships of 'cooperation' replaced those of conflict, 'mutuality' replaced enmity, and 'collective security', 'common bonds', and 'community' became the preferred terms for representing the relationship between the United States and the noncommunist world. (Klein 2003:41.)

The fact that American foreign policy makers sought to achieve both containment and integration, drawing on concepts from both

7 Sukarno 1965:276. Actually, it was Marilyn Monroe (at a Beverly Hills party, 1956), but Soekarno was not focusing on her face at the time. See the famous photo at: http://soekarnojakarta.blogspot.com/2007/08/sukarno-and-marilyn-monroe.html.

the right and the left in America's own political tradition, helps explain the sponsorship by the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom of the African-American writer Richard Wright to attend the Bandung Conference in April 1955 and to meet with members of the *Konfrontasi* study group later that May (see Foulcher in this volume). As an ex-communist who had contributed his story of recantation to the most famous anti-communist book in world-wide circulation, *The god that failed* (Crossman 1949),[8] Wright's presence in Bandung, along with that of the civil rights leader and Black congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr., demonstrated the antiracist and hence anticolonial, global-integrationist bona fides of the United States, as well as its committed anticommunism. From an Indonesian perspective, at least that of the *Konfrontasi* study group, Wright's commitment to social change still sounded too leftist, even though he had ended his essay in *The god that failed* with the stirring, seemingly universalizing pledge 'to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human' (Crossman 1949:162). Like Soekarno's doomed attempt to communicate the principles of Asian nationalism and neutralism to American audiences during his trip, Wright apparently failed to explain what the American kind of internationalizing humanism meant to the ex-communist, Black American writer in the 1950s or why it was applicable to the Indonesian postcolonial situation in the late 1950s.

The American popular monthly *Reader's Digest* helps us investigate some of the underlying assumptions of American cultural imperialism in Indonesia during the 1950s. Started in 1922 by the son of a Presbyterian preacher, DeWitt Wallace, *Reader's Digest* was the best-known right-wing, 'middlebrow', monthly print digest of literature, commentary on world affairs, and Americana around the world, including (is my growing sense) Indonesia, reaching a world-wide circulation of 15.5 million monthly readers in 1951 and 100 million by 1967, 'more than any other publication except the Bible' (Klein 2003:69). Containing stories about Asia from its very

8 For more on Arthur Koestler, Richard Crossman, *The god that failed*, and the role of the CIA in the cultural politics of the Cold War, see Saunders 2000. An Indonesian version of *The god that failed* appeared in 1955, translated by 'L.E. Hakim', aka El Hakim, aka Abu Hanifah, Usmar Ismail's older brother and a prominent Muslim intellectual and member of Masjumi (see Koestler et al. 1955). My thanks to Ajip Rosidi for identifying the translator for me. In his 1949 play *Taufan diatas Asia* (Typhoon over Asia), El Hakim argued for a modern Islamic Indonesian nationalism that involved catching up with the scientific West 'as soon as possible. But otherwise we have to throw off all Western fetters. Especially so in religion' (quoted in Teeuw 1994:112). This 'combination of religious and nationalist ideals' (Teeuw 1994:113) in the themes of El Hakim's plays is also a quality found in the thinking and films of Usmar Ismail, an ideological orientation that was by definition neither 'rightist' or 'leftist', according to Choirotun Chisaan 2008:181.

first issue, *Reader's Digest* promoted American anti-communist internationalism in ways that served American foreign policy objectives. Although it was never directly funded by the US government (Klein 2003:69), *Reader's Digest* was undoubtedly a standard item in USIS reading rooms in Indonesia and around the world. After 1950, the magazine focused particularly on Southeast Asia as a region vulnerable to communism. The August and September 1955 issues featured two articles on Indonesia by America's most famous travel writer and journalistic expert on Asia, James A. Michener (1907-1997), whose 1947 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Tales of the South Pacific* was the source for Rodgers and Hammerstein's hit musical *South Pacific* (Michener 1955a, 1955b; for more on Michener's career and writings, see Klein 2003:100-42).

'It is high noon in the spacious tropical city of Bandung, in Indonesia', Michener begins his eyewitness account of the Bandung conference. 'A blazing sun beats down upon the mountains that rim the city, and golden light plays over the wisps of smoke that rise from an active volcano to the north' (Michener 1955a:75). Michener opens his essay as if he were promoting American tourism to Indonesia. Indeed, since 1954, the US State Department had been advocating American travel abroad as a means 'to produce a specifically sentimental tourist who would forge bonds with people around the world by engaging in meaningful exchanges, while at the same time avoiding displays of wealth, power, or racism that could render America's power visible in unattractive ways' (Klein 2003:109).

> Suddenly the conference-room burst open and more than 300 reporters press forward with hurried questions. Flash bulbs explode [...] In the streets the waiting crowd begins to shout and Indonesians press forward to see the great starts of this extraordinary show. Nasser of Egypt, more handsome than a movie idol, more rugged than a football star, draws a tremendous ovation. He is obviously the city's darling and the popular hero of the conference. Now comes a deeper, more emotional roar. It is for Nehru of India, the respected leader of millions in Asia who feel that his ideas constitute the only path to peace. (Michener 1955a:75.)

Michener turns the scene in which the conference delegates emerge from their meeting into a Hollywood Oscars night in order to achieve the central ideological objective of the editors of *Reader's Digest*: 'an international sense of "we"' in which there was no essential difference between Bandung, Hollywood, the reader, Asian leaders, Indonesian onlookers, or Michener himself (Klein

2003:85). Michener's narrative makes it possible for his American readers to identify with Asians in a way that reassures them that cultural difference 'was not something to be feared but accommodated and even celebrated' (Klein 2003:79). This was a form of internationalism that served the central US foreign policy goal of communism-containing global integration.

I do not know if Indonesians who read the *Reader's Digest*, like the writer and film critic D. Suradji, who cited the magazine in a long piece he wrote on the British film producer Arthur Rank, felt a reciprocal bonding with Americans (Suradji 1961:112). There is in any case nothing equivalent to the American blend of cultural cringe and neo-imperialism that infused and activated cultural categories, or the nationalistic over-confidence that inflated them, in Indonesian ideas about culture, or cultural exchange with other countries that formed an important component of Indonesia's outreach during the early 1950s (Day 2010:136-46; Jones 2005:111-2). As we learn from the essays by Keith Foulcher, Jennifer Lindsay, and Hairus Salim, among others, in this volume, Indonesians were fiercely independent and culturally self-assured, yet still tentative about their newly achieved national identity in the modern, postwar, international world. 'Indonesia' was still very much a work in progress, and it seems doubtful that Indonesians of the early 1950s had as clear a sense of their position and role in the world, either individually or collectively, as American readers of *Reader's Digest*. On 25 March, 1957, Soedjatmoko, managing director of the *Pembangunan* publishing house and bookstores and an editor of *Pedoman* and *Siasat*, ran a contest to see who would submit the best essay on the following questions published in *Suluh Indonesia*, *Abadi*, *Harian Rakjat*, *Pedoman*, and six regional papers in Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi: 'What are we as a nation and a country? What is our goal and our mission in this world, taking into account our specific characteristics, our history, the culture of our people, and also our vision of the future?' (Pauker 1958:306). There were 355 responses from all over Indonesia. In the announcement published on 1 January 1958 in *Siasat* that there were no first, second, or even third prize-winners. Pauker (1958:308) records that Soedjatmoko commented:

> The jury had the impression that in these hundreds of entries the clarity of thinking was frequently subdued by a vivid tendency toward agitation and by the use of stereotypes, while the clarity of exposition suffered from lack of skill in the use of the language. Also, the literary value is still heavily influenced by outmoded literary forms such as the *pantun* which are obstacles to the free expression of ideas.

When it came to commenting on Indonesia's position in the world, according to Guy Pauker (1958:311), who helped Soedjatmoko organize the contest along with the Cornell dance scholar Claire Holt (Foulcher in this volume refers to Holt's meeting with the *Konfrontasi* study group), 10% of the responses had negative things to say about 'Western' influences on Indonesia, while another 10% had good things to say about America, the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe, Egypt, and Syria. Only 22 entries endorsed Indonesia's official 'independent and active foreign policy', but none recommended specific alliances (Pauker 1958:311). 'By far the most frequent expressions', Pauker observes,

> reflect the wish to see Indonesia play an important role in world affairs. What seems characteristic is neither sharp antagonism to foreign nations nor a widespread desire to create permanent ties with other nations, but the desire to see Indonesia play the role of example, teacher, arbiter or conciliator to the world – the longing for national glory. Almost one-fifth of all the entries express this attitude in one form or another (Pauker 1958:308).

James Michener (1955a:76), on the other hand, spends much of the rest of his article articulating a very clear sense of America's global positionality, discussing the 'containment' of the Chinese delegate Chou En-lai in Bandung, who 'was quickly forced to change his line' by staunchly pro-American delegates from Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Iran 'and, particularly, the Philippines'. Michener warns his readers that it would be foolish to ignore the delegates' call for the banning of atomic weapons (which would only embolden the Russians to occupy all of Europe) or their condemnation of racism. 'In the bars of Bandung, in the corridors and along the streets an American discovered with dismay that thousands of Asians honestly believe that their major enemy in the world is the United States' (Michener 1955a:78). But Michener finds no evidence in Bandung that Asia is falling into the hands of the communists. On the contrary, Americans, without a past of imperialism and colonialism to feel guilty or defensive about, should be able to feel a deep commonality with 'the biggest outcome [which was] the death of an inferiority complex'; 'Nation after nation found its voice, and in using it freely discovered that it wasn't really so mad at the white man after all' (Michener 1955a:79).

In his more general survey of Indonesia, 'Islands of beauty and turmoil', in the September 1955 issue of *Reader's Digest*, Michener sounds an initially ominous note in the opening third paragraph:

'Today Communism from Red China is attempting to establish beachheads on these islands, so that free Indonesia assumes vital importance to the world' (Michener 1955b:30). Michener proceeds to lead the *Reader's Digest* tourist around the archipelago, from Java, to Bali, the 'Spice Islands', to Sumatra, which Michener found to be 'the most exciting part of Indonesia', with its 'tin, oil, rubber and wealth unknown' as well as its 'high plateaus' that 'comprise the intellectual center of Indonesia, where pleasant towns exist that are mysteriously 100 percent literate' (Michener 1955b:33-4). He then explains Indonesians' apparent indifference to the threat of communism, as opposed to their greater fear of domination by Europe and America, in terms of the failure of Dutch colonialism to foster Indonesian modernization during more than 300 years of Dutch rule. Threatened by corruption and regional separatism, yet endowed with youthful vigour, tolerance, nationalism, and natural wealth, Indonesia, Michener (1955b:37) is convinced, has a future that is secure, 'even against the pressures of Communism'. Even when he is talking about communist 'beachheads' or the 'vital importance' of a 'free Indonesia', Michener (1955b:31) makes Indonesia sound like a place where Americans could feel at home: at the exotic Javanese ritual even known as the '*selamatan*', 'in recent years another attraction has surpassed even the food: if a man can afford it, he will erect a movie screen and run off six full-length features for his guest'.

'HOLLYWOOD' ACCORDING TO USMAR ISMAIL

The fact that both Soekarno and James Michener associated America with Hollywood in an almost unthinking, reflexive way points to the importance of American films in the shaping of cultural perceptions in Indonesia during the 1950s. During the period 1950-1955, up to 700 American films were imported into Indonesia annually (Sen 1994:24). Through its Technical Cooperation Administration, an agency set up by the Department of State in 1950 to provide 'scientific and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries in order to maintain political stability and to further economic and social progress', the US government provided money, equipment, and personnel for the training of Indonesian filmmakers (Sen 1994; *Records* n.d.). Although vehement opposition to American films in Indonesia did not develop until the 1960s, there were many in the 1950s who found their omnipresence disturbing (Sen 1994:32-4). The veteran writer and cultural observer Armijn Pane,

for example, expressed his concern in 1953 that American movies were stimulating Indonesian viewers and filmmakers to 'flee the world of reality into that of fantasy' (Armijn Pane 1955:162). In his regular column 'Inilah Indonesia' for *Siasat* on 10 October 1956, the journalist 'Tjantrik' commented that the American film 'Rock around the Clock' that had been playing at Jakarta's Astoria theatre for the past two months had caused youngsters in the US and Europe to 'become like people possessed by the devil'; 'Thank God that in our country that creepy movie hasn't (yet?) had evil consequences'.[9] And yet, up and coming Indonesian filmmakers like Usmar Ismail (1921-1971), who spent a year studying film at the University of California Los Angeles in 1952-1953 funded by the Rockefeller Foundation as a member of the most targeted group of Southeast Asians to participate in USIA-sponsored exchange-of-persons programs designed to foster 'mental and ideological dispositions favorable to the "West" in general and the United States in particular', seized opportunities to learn more about American cinematography.[10] Elsewhere in this volume, Hairus Salim examines Usmar's visit to Egypt in 1959, his involvement in the founding of the Muslim cultural organization LESBUMI in 1962, and the polarizing political forces of the late 1950s and early 1960s that stimulated his interest in making films with Islamic themes. My own discussion centres on two essays that Usmar published in the newspaper *Pedoman* in 1953 that shed light on the process of cultural exchange between America and Indonesia in the mid 1950s.[11]

In the first of these essays, 'Lahirnja "Kafedo"' (Usmar Ismail 1983a), published in April 1953, Usmar describes the making of his first film after returning from Los Angeles. The essay is presented as sequence of diary entries. In the first entry, dated 'Ancol 12 Maret 1953', Usmar describes the film as a 'test-case as to whether there is any point for me to go and study in the United States' (Usmar

9 [m]endjadi seperti orang-orang jang kesurupan setan; Sjukur alhamdulilah bahwa di negri kita film serem itu tidak (belum?) menimbulkan akibat-akibat jang begitu djahat.

10 Salim Said 1991:55; Sen 1994:38-41; Frey 2003:554. Frey (2003:555) notes that by 1955, 300 Indonesians went to the US annually on grants.

11 In addition to the essays on Hollywood discussed here, Usmar published seven other reports on Hollywood and Hollywood movies in 1952 during his American visit: 'Laporan dari Hollywood: *Death of a Salesman*', *Pikiran Rakjat* (Bandung), 4-178 (10 January) 1952; 'Laporan dari Hollywood: Sebuah perumpamaan: *Viva Zapata*', *Mimbar Umum Minggu* (Medan) 11-5-1952; 'Oleh-Oleh orang pulang', *Aneka* 20-9-1952; 'Hollywood yang saya kenal', *Duta Suasana* 1-24(1 October) 1952; 'Laporan tentang Hollywood', *Aneka* 22-10-1952; 'Laporan dari Hollywood: *A streetcar named desire*, Seorang Indonesia melihat sebuah world premiere', oleh pembantu tetap di Hollywood [Usmar Ismail], *Mimbar Umum*, 18-11-1952; 'Laporan dari Hollywood: Film-Film tentang manusia dari darah dan daging', *Mimbar Umum* (Medan), 9-12-1952. My thanks to Hairus Salim HS for providing me with this list of Usmar's essays about Hollywood.

Ismail 1983a:172). Compared to his early years with his film company Perfini, which he established in 1951, things are better organized now; there's new equipment, and a car. But problems start immediately: the electric generator breaks, so he has to use his old camera, which can't record sound (Usmar Ismail 1983a:173). Usmar decides to film a fight scene, without the sound, between Harun, leader of the Laskar Rakyat, and Gawega, a fanatic Kafedo follower, who is accused of siding with the Dutch (but later turns out to be loyal to the Revolution; for a plot synopsis and list of actors, see Kristanto 2005:27). This decision prompts Usmar to reflect on the fact that until now in Indonesia 'the fight scenes have never been good, not like Humphrey Bogart or Kirk Douglas;[12] his solution is to have the actors train with some Minang martial arts experts (*pendekar*). To in effect choreograph the fight scene makes it possible to plan it ahead of time as a structured series of discrete '*shots* (*pengambilan*)' (174). In his second diary entry later on in the essay, Usmar returns to some of the technical issues of shooting and editing that make for the qualitative difference between Indonesian and American films (Usmar Ismail 1983a:176). Another idea that Usmar has picked up in Los Angeles is that trained actors are superior to amateur ones. Earlier he had been influenced by the Italian neorealist practice of simply taking a camera into the street and using ordinary people to make films about real life (Salim Said 1991:56). But he was struck when he was in Los Angeles how quickly and intelligently Hollywood stars like Gregory Peck responded to directions (Usmar Ismail 1983a:175). He reflects with amusement on the fact that his critics used to accuse Perfini of being a 'junk dealer' (*tukang loak*); now a critic like Balfas will write in *Siasat*: 'Usmar is nuts about Hollywood' (*Usmar sudah gila Hollywood*)! Usmar's ideal is to make high quality films, but as he makes clear in the rest of his essay, the technical and financial obstacles of doing so in Indonesia are daunting. The main point of the essay is to demonstrate Usmar's determination to adapt ideas about making films that he has learned in America to conditions in Indonesia, in order to produce better Indonesian films, however long that takes.

Usmar's second essay, 'Inilah Hollywood' (Usmar Ismail 1983b), can be read as an ironic commentary on the Indonesian film industry and its politics. It's harder to get to see someone like Frank Y. Freeman, Vice President of Paramount Pictures, than it is to make an appointment with Mr. Sumanang, Menteri Perekonomian Republic Indonesia, or Oom Mononutu, Menteri Penerangan RI (Usmar Ismail 1983b:222), Usmar writes, in an ironic reflection on

12 [a]degan perkelahiannya tak pernah baik, tidak seperti Humphrey Bogart atau Kirk Douglas.

the lowly status on the Indonesian film director. But in a sort of refutation of Michener's sentimental depiction of Americans and their exotic Asian 'others', Usmar implicitly likens the Hollywood mogul to a 1950s Indonesian politician. The heads of the great Hollywood studios are really like 'raja' engaging in constant competition with one another:

> Quarreling behind the scenes and in the open, they stab at one other face to face or from behind, insulting each other non-stop, so that to the outsider it seems sometimes that one of them must collapse at a certain point. Each of them has the trait of only looking out for number one and tries constantly to stand in the way of the others.[13]

But if Indonesian film producers follow Hollywood's example (which presumably they already do, or why would Usmar make the comment!) and begin a practice of 'clawing at each other', it will be difficult to avoid total disaster (for both the movie industry and the country). Yet in other respects, Hollywood's differences with the Indonesian film world are instructive in a positive sense. Hollywood's elite includes innovative people from humble backgrounds; most of them 'originate from various entertainment businesses, popular theatre, rural movie houses, circuses, and so on'.[14] These people are equipped with sharp noses for popular taste and cater to the masses; all that matters is 'two letters b.o. (box office), alias profit'.[15] Their weakness is that they feel inferior to people with intelligence and talent; they give in to 'independent artists' (*seniman liar*) like Elia Kazan or John Huston (or Usmar Ismail?!) and let them make the films they want, according to their own artistic principles. But this weakness is in fact their strength, for it is artistic creations such as these that make Hollywood the 'center of the world's best filmmaking' (*pusat pembikinan film yang terbaik di dunia*) (Usmar Ismail 1983b:225). The world of Hollywood may be isolated, a world unto itself, but it is ruled by young people who take risks, are filled with optimism, and who love their work with a passion (Usmar Ismail 1983b:228-9).

13 Perselisihan gelap-gelapan dan terang-terangan saling tikam-menikam dari depan dan dari belakang, jelek-menjelekkan tidak henti-hentinya hingga kadang-kadang bagi orang luaran terasa bahwa salah satunya mesti akan roboh pada suatu waktu. Masing-masing bersikap terlalu mementingkan diri sendiri dan tak putus-putusnya berusaha untuk menghalangi yang lain (Usmar Ismail 1983b:223).

14 [b]erasal dari berbagai-bagai usaha penghibur, ketoprak-ketoprak, bioskop rakyat, komidi-komidi kuda dan lainnya (Usmar Ismail 1983b:224).

15 [d]ua huruf b.o. (box office) alias penghasilan (Usmar Ismail 1983b:224).

Usmar is accomplishing something in both his 1953 *Pedoman* essays that is unusual for either Indonesian or American observers of transcultural exchange in the 1950s: he sees both the similarities and the differences between his own cultural context and a foreign one that, in only a year of total immersion, he has come to understand pretty well. Usmar was not a cultural tourist, as both Soekarno and James Michener were in different ways. He was an independent-minded Indonesian cinematographer who knew what he needed to learn from America and who took the time and trouble to go there to do so. If there is a longing in his essays for Indonesia to be more like America, at least as far as some aspects of its movie industry is concerned, there is also expression of a strong commitment to making films in Indonesia and to struggling with Indonesian social and economic conditions in order to do so. In depicting the positive aspects of Hollywood filmmaking practices in his essays, Usmar was not unlike Soekarno in his speech to Congress in 1956, reaching out to America's better, non-ideological, pre-Cold War self in a spirit of solidarity with the ideals of independence and universal human freedom.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

In this (still very exploratory) essay I have tried to sketch a framework for examining cultural traffic between Indonesia and the United States in the mid-1950s, a liminal period in relations of all kinds between the two countries, when official policies and unofficial attitudes had not yet hardened into Cold War dogmas. The thread that connects Soekarno to James Michener to Usmar Ismail, politicians high and low to Indonesian peasants to USIA to the 'middlebrow' American subscriber to *Reader's Digest*, is Hollywood. Not only jazz, pop music, and Tarzan comics but also American films flooded Indonesia in the late 1950s. Hollywood movies constituted a powerful popular medium through which American culture and cultural attitudes were communicated to Indonesians at all levels of society, in ways and to a degree that remain to be investigated. Hollywood also provided the exotic, Orientalized scenarios by means of which popular American writers like James Michener created images of 'Indonesia' and its culture with which Americans could conjure forth 'an international sense of "we"'.

Existing studies of the film industry in Indonesia pay no attention to the impact of American movies on the Indonesian imagination, even though these studies record the attempts by the fledgling Indonesian film industry and, in the early 1960s, by outraged Indonesian viewers on the left to control the flood of American films into the country (Sen 1994:29-36; Said 1991:69-75). Consumers of American films like Usmar Ismail and Soekarno, however, not only watched a lot of American movies, they thought long and hard about what they were watching. Here, for example, is a comment Soekarno made to Cindy Adams, one that illustrates his disappointment in American incomprehension of Afro-Asian anticolonialism and nationalism:

> I asked the late Eric Johnson[16] Chairman[17] of the American Motion Pictures Corporation,[18] about a United Artists film called, 'Broken Arrow,' the story of a great love between an Indian squaw and an American officer. 'Why has this Indian girl to die in the end? Why can't you make them a happy couple? How do you think we feel at such obvious maneuvers on the screen? Your color barrier, which even in the movies shows dark skin as plainly inferior, is a disgust to the Asian!'
>
> Replied Johns[t]on, 'The film business is a business to make money. The [American] South would boycott it if the white man and brown girl ended up living happily in society.'
>
> Films should be instruments to promote world solidarity, not kill it. Here's an inexpensive way to show us kindness. Never mind the dollars. Just make films showing you like us. Yet even in make-believe situations America tears us apart. (Sukarno 1965:298.)

As far as Usmar Ismail's ideas about Hollywood are concerned, there is at least one essay waiting to be written about American influences on the cultural imaginary of his own movies. Usmar's

16 This should be: Johnston.

17 This should be: president.

18 Johnston was the key figure in coordinating relations between Hollywood and the US State Department, which involved the careful vetting of scripts to ensure that Hollywood films conveyed positive impressions of America abroad (Cull 2008:84). Johnston hosted Soekarno in Hollywood in May 1956. According to *Siasat*'s 'Kronik Kebudajaan' in the issue of 21 March 1956, Johnston arrived in Jakarta as a personal envoy from President Eisenhower 'to inspect development projects having to do with US technical assistance" (*untuk memeriksa projek-projek pembangunan jang berhubungan dengan bantuan tehnis A.S*).

masterpiece of political satire, *Tamu Agung* (1955), for example, if compared to the American film that inspired it, Henry Koster's Cold War musical based on a play of the same name by Nikolai Gogol, *The Inspector General* (1949), starring Danny Kaye in the title role, would demonstrate, I think, that Usmar had a critical, Indonesian nationalist take, not just on the authoritarian politics of Soekarno, who would travel to America the following year as a '*tamu agung*', honoured guest, of a US government anxious to secure his allegiance during the Cold War, but also on Hollywood itself, America's most powerful, entrancing, and disturbing cultural 'guest' in Indonesia.[19]

I do not know how much more material as insightful as Soekarno's comments to Cindy Adams or Usmar Ismail's reflections on Hollywood await discovery or to what extent it would reveal the inner workings of the Indonesian postcolonial imagination and its response to American culture in the formative years of the new republic.[20] At least one piece of critical commentary on Martha Graham's performances that I know of, published in *Siasat* on 25 January 1956 by Asrul Sani (1997a), another beneficiary of a USIA exchange-of-persons scholarship to the United States and a close associate of Usmar Ismail's, suggests that thoughtful Indonesian viewers had a more sophisticated and nuanced response to avant garde American culture than USIS officials imagined or desired. In the same year Asrul also wrote an interesting and contentious review for *Kisah* of the first-ever American anthology of Indonesian literature and topical essays in translation, published in 1956 as a supplement to the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine by a Ford Foundation-funded organization known as Intercultural Publications Inc. (Asrul Sani 1997b; *Perspective* 1956). The list of contributors to this collection reads like a roll call of *Gelanggang*, *Konfrontasi*, and PSI supporters, except for one Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Like the opinions of Hollywood movies surveyed in this essay, and as James Michener, very much to his credit as an observer of newly independent Indonesia, would agree, the *Atlantic Monthly* anthology of Indonesian writing suggests that, despite the best efforts of the United States and its agencies to bring Indonesia into the American Cold War camp during the mid-1950s, Indonesians preferred their own 'third way'.

19 Asrul Sani published a translation of Gogol's play in 1986 (Gogol 1986). I don't know whether it was available to Usmar Ismail in published or unpublished form in 1955.

20 For instance, Hamka's account (1954) of his four month stay in the US in the early 1950s and H.B. Jassin's letters (1984) during his visit to the US in the early 1960s are examples of sources awaiting further study.

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6

Sibling tension and negotiation
Malay(sian) writer-political activists' links and orientation to Indonesia

Budiawan

We might see the cultural traffic between Indonesia and abroad in 1950-1965 as an imbalanced flow of influences, in which Indonesia was in the position of being influenced rather than the reverse. While Indonesian cultural workers presented their works abroad, searched for inspiration from and extended their references to various sites of 'world' cultures, as other contributors to this volume discuss, subsequently they processed imported ideas into 'local' expressions, to fit the aspiration for so-called national identity.[1] This was common in recently decolonized nations, since the 'nation building project' was at the initial stage.

The case of Indonesia–Malaya cultural traffic, particularly in literature, however, tends to show the opposite direction. Rather than being the importer, Indonesia was the exporter of literary works and ideas to Malaya without, to a great extent, necessarily being aware of it, for it was the latter that took initiatives to search for inspiration from the former. In short, Indonesia became the 'Mecca' for the writers of Malaya,[2] especially the Malay writers, both in the given period and even earlier.[3]

1 Yet, as the idea of 'national identity' was (and is) contested, the creative processes of adapting to 'local' expressions tended to run in hot and even endless debates. Keith Foulcher's chapter in this volume is the study of such a cultural debate in post-independence Indonesia.

2 Until the breakdown of the Malaysian Federation in 1965, after which Malaysia and Singapore were separated, the term 'Malaya' referred to the whole British colonies of the peninsula including the island of Singapore.

3 Such a direction of influences however, did not happen in popular culture. In theatre and film, for instance, instead of importing from Indonesia, Malaya was exporting its works to Indonesia. The popularity of Malayan *bangsawan* performers such as Habsah binte Buang, for instance, reached beyond Singapore and the peninsula. Performances of this theatre group in big cities of Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan were common; while films produced by Shaw Brothers' Malay Film Productions and Cathay Keris were very popular in Indonesia. On a short study of Malay films and theatres from 1940s to 1965, see Barnard 2009.

This historical fact is not something new to Malay(sian) scholars and cultural workers. Despite the more 'inward-looking nationalistic' tone in their creative processes over the last two decades, Malay(sian) cultural workers acknowledge their past cultural debts to Indonesia, particularly in the colonial era and until the 1970s. Their sense of having shared 'cultural roots' within the idea of '*bangsa serumpun*' is well-maintained, as is seen in the formation of various regional cultural networks and associations.

On the other hand, only a few Indonesians have learned this fact well; and few have noticed how Malay writers imported and processed borrowed ideas from Indonesia into their own expressions. Consequently, while the creations of Malay(sian) writers may have resonance with Indonesian works, these are unfamiliar to most Indonesians. We might ask how many Indonesians read Malay(sian) literary works, whereas almost every Malay(sian) secondary school student reads Indonesian literary works.[4] Indonesian scholar Maman S. Mahayana even claims that 'Malaysian literature is like a foreign literature to the Indonesians, more foreign than English, Dutch, or Japanese, Chinese and Indian literatures'.[5] On the other hand, Indonesian literature is by no means unfamiliar to Malaysians (Maman S. Mahayana 2001:ix), since it has long been considered part of their literature.[6]

Perhaps Maman is a little exaggerating. However, coming from such a concern this paper aims to explore the historical processes of Malaya – Indonesia literary links in 1950-1965. The focus is on how Malay writers, most of whom were political activists and journalists as well, sought inspiration from Indonesia in their creative processes as a part of the struggle for the Malayan independence. As a preliminary study, this paper is limited to showing the links the Malay writers built with Indonesia, and how these links affected and were affected by the political relations between the two countries.

4 The poems of Amir Hamzah, for instance, were used as the main reading materials in the module of Nusantara Literature in secondary schools in Malaya in the1960s, and have been used as compulsory texts for the final exams since 2000. In addition, the works of other prominent Indonesian writers including Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Sitor Situmorang and Chairil Anwar, were read extensively by secondary school students in Malaysia. See Shafwan Hadi Umry 2008; while in Indonesia, very few secondary school students read Malaysian literary works, and it is only at the Universitas Sumatera Utara (Medan), there is a module on comparative literature of Indonesia and Malaysia. See Mula Harahap n.d.

5 In original text: kesusasteraan Malaysia bagi kita di Indonesia laksana kesusasteraan asing yang lebih asing dari kesusasteraan Inggris, Belanda, atau Jepang, Cina dan India.

6 Jassin 1983:5. Even Jassin (1983:5) adds that many Indonesian literary works no longer available in the market in Indonesia were reprinted in Malaysia. This was his observation in the early 1980s, when the economic development and political stability dominated the public discourse, marginalizing the concern for culture, especially literature.

I am limiting my discussion to literary writers because, as I will demonstrate later, in the context of Malaya–Indonesia cultural links and traffic, they were the primary agents of the ways that political ideas were initially transmitted, and at a crucial time they played a part in resolving the political tension between the two countries. This is thus a good example of ways that literature (as the text of ideas) and politics (as the action of the texts) are closely intertwined.

The focus of my discussion is elaborated into questions as follows: how were the modern Indonesian–Malayan cultural (especially literary) networks built? Who took the initiatives of building the networks? What was the frequency of travel of writers of both countries? Who travelled where, and what did they do in their neighbour country? What had made such a network possible? How were these networks affected by, and how did they affect, the political dynamics in each country?

In addressing these questions, I will first discuss the historical development prior to 1950. As many historical accounts of the Malayan political movement note, the nationalist struggles of Malays to independence was much affected by their Indonesian nationalist counterparts in the 1930s, or even earlier.[7] As literary activism was inseparable from political activism, the course of political history seemed to be not only in parallel but also closely linked to the course of literary history.

Secondly, I will discuss the historical development from 1950 to 1957. This was a crucial period in Malayan history, as the British colonial rulers imposed the state of emergency, by which political activism was tightly controlled. In such conditions, literary activism increased among Malay activists, as indicated by the formation of the 'Angkatan Sasterawan 50' (Generation of the Writers of 1950, or ASAS 50). I will describe the links of ASAS 50 to Indonesian literary activism until 1957, when the Federation of Malaya attained its independence from the British. It is interesting to examine how 'Malay' sentiment was articulated, when 'Malayness' began to have some political meaning, by which the 'politics of difference' was inevitable.

Thirdly, I will discuss the 'exchange' of Malayn and Indonesian writer-activists from the attainment of Malayan independence (1957) until the outbreak of 'Confrontation' (1963). I will examine to what extent such cultural links and networks were affected by the political tensions and dispute between the two countries.

7 This is not meant to imply that non-Malays, *in extenso* the Chinese and the Indians, were not involved in the struggle for the Malayan independence. However, since the focus of discussion is Malay writers, particularly the leftist Malays, this essay does not discuss the roles of the Chinese and the Indians in the struggle for the Malayan independence.

EARLY CONTACTS OF MODERN MALAY ACTIVISTS WITH INDONESIA; 1930S-1950

Malaysian scholar Ahmad Kamal Abdullah notes that the growth and development of modern Malaysian literature and Indonesian literature were inseparable. The early stage was visible in the 1930s, when young Malay writers such as Harun Aminurrasyid, Muhammad Yasin Makmur, and Abdullah Sidek were intensively engaged with the works of the Pujangga Baru writers.[8] However, as William R. Roff remarks, the seeds of contact were in fact laid down earlier. Around the mid-1920s, many students of Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) – established in 1913 in Taiping but later moved to Tanjung Malim, Perak, in 1922 – already enjoyed Balai Pustaka's novels and other modern literature bought for the college library. Individual teachers and students also subscribed to Indonesian periodicals,[9] which they read in conjunction with the new Malay newspapers and journals also coming out at about this time (Roff 1967:155).

As an educational institution to train teachers for the Malay schools, the SITC was the primary site from which Indonesian influences were spread throughout the Peninsula. This, as Hooker describes, was because 'its graduates believed that Malays were not keeping up with the changes of the modern world and needed to work hard to catch up with the progress they believed was happening around them. In touch with anti-colonial and nationalist student movements in Indonesia, they went out into their communities determined to inspire change through teaching and writings' (Hooker 2003:172).

The 'fascination' of Indonesian literary activism to the Malay intelligentsia was in fact by then already something common. Ishak bin Haji Mohd., for instance, in the 1930s became increasingly interested in the cultural, and especially literary renaissance manifest in the Indonesian peoples in the Netherlands Indies. He read all the Indonesian books and periodicals he could lay his hands on (Roff 1967:228).

The promotion of Indonesia as the source of inspiration for change and progress was also taught at schools. By exposing Indonesian nationalist activism, the teachers at the SITC inspired a number of students, led by Ibrahim Yaakub, to form Belia Malaya (Young Malaya) in early 1930. This organization was modelled on similar youth groups

8 Ahmad Kamal Abdullah 2006:68. See also the short version of this article under the author's pseudonym Kemala (n.d.).

9 One of the Indonesian periodicals they subscribed to was *Fikiran Rakjat*, in which political activists such as Soekarno frequently wrote articles expressing the ideas of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism, and articulated nationalist thoughts and national independence. On the fact that they subscribed to *Fikiran Rakjat*, see Roff (1967:173, footnote 121, 225).

in Java and Sumatra, dedicated to the unification and joint advancement of the Malay and Indonesian languages (Roff 1967:225).

Despite its short life, Belia Malaya was likely an embryo for the formation of the first political organization among the Malays, namely the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, Union of Malay Youth) in 1938.[10] As told by Mustapha Hussain, one of the KMM's founders, Ibrahim once admitted that he had been intensely influenced by Indonesian political movements. History lessons delivered by teachers inspired him; and with three friends he secretly enrolled in the Soekarno-led Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party) in 1929.[11] Unsurprisingly from that beginning, Ibrahim Yaakub had an ambition of struggling for Malayan Independence as part of Indonesian Independence under the idea of 'Indonesia Raya' (Greater Indonesia).[12]

However, not all of the Indonesian-influenced Malay intelligentsia shared this nationalist aspiration. Mustapha Hussain, for instance, was close to a number of Indonesian nationalists, yet he never subscribed to the idea of the struggle for Malayan Independence as a part of Indonesia.

Despite the different nationalist aspirations among the Malays, the most important thing to note in their initial contacts with the Indonesian nationalists was that the term 'politics' began to enter into the public discourse among them. This invention of 'politics' was something phenomenal in the pre-war Malayan history. As Anthony Milner notes, certain Malay writers have even remarked that until the late colonial period, 'no politics' existed among the Malays. Milner suspects that this comment refers to the absence of more than just political institutions and political parties. There was in the Malay language no specific word for 'politics'.[13]

10 The other founders of KMM included Mustapha Hussain, Hassan Haji Manan, Othman Mohd. Noor, Idris Hakim, Abdul Karim Rashid. Many were either school teachers or journalists, and some were government clerks. On the working committee of KMM and the life story of each member, see Mustapha Hussain 2005:135-61.

11 Mustapha Hussain 2005:145. The three friends joining Soekarno's PNI were Hassan Manan, Abdul Karim Rashid, and Isa Mohd. bin Mahmud. As PNI members they subscribed to *Fikiran Rakjat*, the organ of the party. See Roff 1967:225.

12 Soh 2005. Yet, this idea failed to get enough support among the Malays. He even fled to Indonesia, just after the Japanese surrendered to the Allied Forces and before the British troops returned to Malaya in September 1945. Ibrahim later became an Indonesian citizen and changed his name to Iskandar Kamil. He then ran a banking business. When he passed away in 1979, he was honoured by the Indonesian government with burial in the Heroes' Cemetery in Kalibata, Jakarta. On the life story of Ibrahim Yaakub told from the perspective of a former alliance betrayed, see Mustapha Hussain 2005.

13 Milner 2002:2. The terms '*politik*', and then '*merdeka*' were indeed imported from Indonesian, as acknowledged by Malay communists such as Abdullah C.D. See *Islam, Melayu, komunis* 2005:15.

How 'politics' then shaped the consciousness of being a collective entity among the Malays was crucially visible in their rejection of the British colonial rulers' proposal of Malayan Union in 1946. It was a proposal consisting of three points: the sovereignty of the rulers would be transferred to the British Crown, the autonomy of individual Malay states would be absorbed into the Union, and the privileges which had previously been reserved for the Malays would be available to members of other communities (Hooker 2003:187).

To the Malays, this proposal did not promise independence, and it gave much concession to the non-Malays. Whereas by this time they were witnessing the tide of anti-colonial mood in other parts of Asia, such as Indonesia, Indo-China, and India. Even among the radical Malay nationalist fighters, as one of its veterans Said Zahari notes, Indonesia was seen as 'the centre of political power, capable of pioneering the national struggle for freedom of the entire archipelago from western domination'.[14]

Malay popular reaction against the Malayan Union was the causal factor that provided the catalyst to Malay nationalism. The Malay elites believed that a political system offering a common citizenship and equal political rights for all would destroy the Malay race. The Malay congresses held in 1946 led to the formation of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which became the primary organization for protecting and promoting the Malay interests. The conservative, English-speaking traditional leaders, formerly supportive of British rule, now led the struggle against the Malayan Union and emerged as the undisputed leaders of Malay society as a whole (Mauzy 2006:49).

Consequently, the radical and Leftist Malay nationalists initiating the nationalist movement in the 1930s were marginalized. They lost their momentum to enhance their own aspirations when the British agreed to abrogate the Malayan Union and invited UMNO to draft a plan for a more suitable constitutional arrangement. In addition, British repressive measures against the Leftists as a counter to the communist insurgency in late 1940s led to the Leftists being expelled from the Peninsula. Many moved to Singapore.

However, as Joel S. Kahn notes, the British crackdown on overt political activities and organizations soon spread from the Peninsula

14 Said Zahari 2007:5. It is noteworthy that the British proposal of Malayan Union was in fact a counter to the idea of Malayan Independence as a part of Indonesia as proposed by Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung (KRIS, Union of Peninsular Indonesians, later changed to Kekuatan Rakyat IStimewa, Special Strength of the People). A similar change of name attached to a known acronym happened to KMM, which was previously Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Union of Malay Youth) and changed to Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka (Union of Malay Independence), indicating the shift to the aspiration for a form of popular nationalism).

to Singapore itself. The result was that they turned away from overt forms of political activity. This generated, in turn, a renaissance of Malay literature and the arts. In the 1950s, Singapore became the centre of an often highly politicized Malay artistic and literary scene.[15] One of the noteworthy cultural events was the formation of Angkatan Sasterawan 50 (the Association of the 1950 Writers, or better known as ASAS 50). I will now discuss the formation of this association and its links to Indonesia until the Federation of Malaya gained its independence in 1957, a moment when 'Malayness' in a political sense began to be defined more intensely and become placed in legal framework.

THE FORMATION OF ASAS 50: ITS DYNAMICS AND LINKS TO INDONESIA UNTIL 1957

Founded after a meeting on 6 August 1950 at the home of a graduate of the SITC, Mohd. Ariff Ahmad, ASAS 50 was the first literary association in post-war Malaya. It was an association representing the voice of the community, which utilized literature as the ideal thrust towards independence for Malaya. Its manifesto of '*Sastra untuk Masyarakat*' (Literature for Society) together with its pioneers such as Asraf, Keris Mas, Tongkat Warrant (or Usman Awang), Masuri SN and Awani Sarkam,[16] formed the main shaping force in the development of modern Malay literature.[17]

According to one of its founders, Masuri S.N., as cited by Maman, the name 'ASAS 50' initially emerged when Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (STA) met with a number of Malay writers in Singapore prior to the formation of this association. When STA asked

15 Kahn 2006:114. In film production, for instance, as Barnard (2009:127) notes, in the twenty-year period following World War Two, Singapore witnessed the 'Golden Age'. During this period, over 200 films were produced.

16 Kahn 2006:115. In the website of ASAS 50, the list of the founders of this association is written as follows (most of them with their pen names in brackets): Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (MAS), Kamaluddin Muhammad (Keris Mas), Abdul Wahab Muhammad (Awamil Sirkam), Abdul Jalil Haji Nor (Merayu Rawan), Munir Ali (Rosmera), Kumasi Haji Dainuri (Teruna Jaya), Abdul Majid Husain (Hamzah), Masuri Salikun (Masuri S.N.), Abu Yamin Kasun, Ahmad Ramli Abdul Karim (Ramlimah), Muhammad Daud and Muhammad Yusof Yaacob (Jim). See at http://www.asas50.com. Kahn mentions only some of the founders, while in the website of ASAS 50, Usman Awang, one of the most prominent Malay writers in the 1950s, is peculiarly not mentioned. The website does not provide enough information about the historical background of ASAS 50. It exposes the contributions to the recent development of the Malay(sian) arts and culture, demonstrating its relevance and significance to the present Malay(sian) literary condition.

17 See at http://www.asas50.com.

one of the members about the name of this would-be association, the latter said that they were 'Sasterawan Angkatan 1950', following Indonesia's 'Angkatan 1945',[18] as they were impressed by the Indonesian revolution and influenced by the works of the 'Angkatan 1945' (Li Chuan Siu 1975:23).

The fact that even in naming their organization these writers followed the Indonesian model was no surprise, since most of them had belonged to the Malayan Nationalist Party. Reprising the wartime idea of a Greater Indonesia, this party still envisioned independent Malaya as a part of Indonesia. Therefore these writers kept looking at Indonesia as their primary reference, while many of them built personal links with their Indonesian counterparts. They read literary works of Indonesian writers, while the mass media they managed, such as the newsmagazine *Persatuan,* covered news from and about Indonesia (Maman S. Mahayana 2001:92).

The way that Indonesia was seen as 'Mecca' by the writers of ASAS 50 is, for instance, obvious in one column by a Malaysian columnist Rustam A. Sani. In his obituary of Usman Awang, one of the prominent activists of ASAS 50, Rustam writes that while the [aristocratic] Malay elites were hegemonized by the colonial education, those belonging to ASAS 50 were fascinated by the dynamics of Western arts and culture through modern Indonesian literature. Indonesian writers were experimenting with ideas and expression while enhancing the Malay language (having been officially named Bahasa Indonesia) by exploring broader references of ideas, including Western ones. Usman and his fellow Malay writers used the works of Indonesian writers as a sort of university, through which they modernized the Malay literature.[19]

18 Maman S. Mahayana 2001:208. The Indonesian literary critic Ajip Rosidi once wrote that the naming of 'Angkatan', which is the translation of Dutch word *generatie* (generation), by the writers claiming to belong the generation themselves was in fact ridiculous. Naming of a generation and its relation to categorizing literary history into periods should be the concern of literary critics, instead of the writers themselves. This is because 'periodization' should be based on genres, not on the age of its writers, or political phase. See a review of Ajip Rosidi's *Masalah angkatan dan periodisasi sejarah sastra Indonesia* (1973) by an anonymous reviewer at http://bukudanhanyabuku.blogspot.com/2008/02/masalah-angkatan-dan-periodisasi.html.

19 Rustam A. Sani n.d. As noted by Dato Dr Kemala (the pseudonym of Ahmad Kamal Abdullah), Usman Awang's works were much influenced by the works of Amir Hamzah, *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Hang Tuah.* In addition, he had close personal links with contemporary Indonesian poets such as W.S. Rendra, Taufiq Ismail, Goenawan Mohamad, Abdul Hadi W.M. and Leon Agusta. However, Kemala (2008) adds, to a great extent the 'Malayness' of Usman's works was distinct, and can only be understood by the Malaysian Malays. Yet, he does not elaborate in what ways those works 'can only be understood by the Malaysian Malays'. This is likely indicative of the rise of 'Malayness of Malaysia', in comparison to, perhaps, 'Malayness of Indonesia', into which the political meaning of 'Malayness' is inserted. On how 'Malayness' is contested in post-independence Malaysia, see Barnard 2004.

Another example of a Malay writer-activist having personal links with Indonesians was A. Samad Ismail. As a part-time correspondent for Indonesia's *Antara* news agency, with its 'offices' at *Utusan Melayu* – where, in the spirit of solidarity, Samad and his cohorts called each other 'Bung' (as in Bung Samad and Bung Kamal) mimicking the fashion in revolutionary Indonesia – he came to know several Indonesian leaders, including Adam Malik, Sutan Sjahrir, Haji Agus Salim, and A. K. Ghani.[20]

Although Samad was not officially a member of ASAS 50, as the editor of *Utusan Melayu* he was the mentor for the members of this association (Rajakumar 1987:39), or the one who 'threw himself behind ASAS 50' (Kamaluddin Muhammad 1987:37). At *Utusan Melayu* and its affiliate publications, he drew around him some of the best Malay writers of the times, including Kamaluddin Muhammad and Usman Awang, filling the newspaper's pages with their stories, poems, and essays and contributing several of his own under various pen names. The ASAS 50 writers consciously fostered Malay nationalism and, at the same time, promoted writing in Malay as an act of national expression. Moreover, says Samad, 'they wrote about poor people, laborers, and peasants and the struggle against poverty, the inequities of landlordism' (Rush n.d.).

Obviously, the manifesto of ASAS 50 was much in parallel with that of Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA, the Institute of People's Culture) in Indonesia, in the sense that they shared the idea of 'engaged literature'.[21] The term '*masyarakat*' here did not only refer to race, that is the Malays as a whole, but particularly to class, that is the poor or the working class Malays. However, virtually no sources mention that members of ASAS 50 had close links with the members of LEKRA.[22] Three explanations could be presented here. First, LEKRA itself was still then at the initial stage. Internally it still had to consolidate and to lay down the ideological foundation for its members, alongside the agenda of its patron, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) which was reviving after being crushed in the 'Madiun Affair' of 1948.

Second, from Malaya's side, despite the presence of radical elements on the Malay nationalist scene of post-war Singapore, it was ultimately the more conservative nationalist elements that

20 Rush n.d. Dato Dr Kemala (2008) mentions that Samad Ismail was also close to Mochtar Lubis.

21 My gratitude to Keith Foulcher for reminding me of this term.

22 In his study on the comparison of the literary systems and ideological conflicts in Indonesia and Malaysia, Maman S. Mahayana himself could only speculate that the polemic in Malaysia between those supporting 'arts for society' against those supporting the 'arts for the arts' might have been influenced by what was happening in Indonesia. See Maman S. Mahayana 2001:233.

assumed control of the movement. The work of the 1950s Malay artists and literary figures, most of them associated with ASAS 50, may now still be considered part of the Malay literary canon (as obviously seen in the works of Usman Awang as mentioned above). Their more radical, cosmopolitan brand of nationalism was effectively suppressed as a consequence of the rise of UMNO (Kahn 2006:115).

Third, as the consequence of the UMNO's dominance in the Malay nationalist movement, the issue of 'nationhood', which by then meant promoting the rights and privileges of the Malays in co-existence with the non-Malays, was more dominant, rather than the issue of '*kerakyatan*' ('peoplehood') in the sense of class perspective, free of ethno-nationalism, promoted by the Malay (and non-Malay) Leftist nationalists. The cultural and political agenda promoting 'Malayness' was then dominating the nationalist discourse. One of the noteworthy outcomes of this sort of struggle in pre-independence Malaya was the introduction of the Roman spelling in the Malay language, as one of the important results of the Third Malay Language and Literary Congress initiated by ASAS 50 in 1956.[23]

Concerning the introduction of the Roman spelling (or 'Rumi' as the Malays call it) and the promotion of the Malay language, the general chairman of UMNO Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj repeatedly mentioned Indonesia as the model. In his speech over Radio Malaya on 30th June, 1956, he said:

> During my visit to Indonesia I was taken around the universities and libraries. At the universities there are many graduates taking up various courses of studies. All the graduates are Indonesians, Chinese and Eurasians. But they all use Rumi. When our country achieves independence, a number of our children would like to take up higher studies. They may go to Indonesia and with the knowledge of Rumi script they can easily enter the Indonesian universities. In the libraries are books in Rumi which will be a great help to use here. But if we do not know Rumi, how can we read them?[24]

He repeated this point in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Third Malay Language and Literary Congress in Johore Bahru, 16 September 1956:

23 See http://www.asas50.com.

24 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj 2007:97-8. Tunku Abdul Rahman was likely speaking in Malay. Yet, the book cited above is in English, so that his speech as cited above is already translated into English by the publisher.

> When I visited Indonesia last year I was greatly impressed by the efforts made to encourage the people to use the Malay language, which is called the Indonesian language there, with the result that within a short time it became the medium of instruction in the universities. So with Indonesia having made such an advance and carried out a research on the language the work of our language experts here will certainly be made easier, but we have to work hand in hand with the Indonesians. Any notion by our language experts here that we should ignore Indonesia and make our own planning will, I am afraid, make the Malay language to branch into two, three or four directions.[25]

Again he emphasized the importance of cooperation and collaboration between the Malay experts and their Indonesian counterparts, in his ambition of making the Malay language like the English language, in which 'the meaning of words are the same everywhere although the sound is different when pronounced by an Englishman, a Scottish, an Irishman, a Welsh, Canadian, Australian, American or South African' (Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj 2007:102).

Another important result of the Congress was the idea of founding the Language and Literary Council, adopting the Indonesia's Balai Pustaka. It aimed to advance the production of school textbooks for the primary to tertiary educational levels, to publish qualified literary works and advance research on both modern and classical Malay literature, in addition to promoting potentially talented writers. To initiate this institution, the Malayan government invited a number of Indonesian writers, including Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (Ahmad Kamal Abdullah 2006:70).

It is noteworthy that two years before the Third Malay Language and Literary Congress was held, Malaya and Singapore sent a delegation of five representatives and fifteen observers under the leadership of Harun Aminurrasyid to attend the Language Congress held by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in Medan. (While in the Third Malay Congress in Johore, Indo-

25 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj 2007:101-2. Interestingly, before coming to this point of view, he gave examples on how people in the northern and southern parts of the Peninsula used the same words but with different meanings. For instance, the common everyday word *semalam* which in the north and east of Malaya means 'last night', in the southern and central parts of Malaya means 'yesterday'. Similarly with the word *bebal*. In the north it means 'to show temper', but in the south it means 'stupid'. He then insisted that 'if even in our own country one word is used with dissimilar meanings in different parts of the country, then the dissimilarity in meanings would be more marked between Malaya and Indonesia'. See Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj 2007:99-100.

nesia sent a group of scholars and writers which included Prof Dr Prijono, Prof Sutan Muhammad Zain, Prof Dr Poerbatjaraka, Dr Slamet Mulyono, Nur Sutan Iskandar, Mengatas, Amin Singgih and others (Li Chuan Siu 1975:34-5). At the Medan Congress, they learned that until 1954, Indonesia had published 40,000 books and brochures in Indonesian (Li Chuan Siu 1975:32) – something that impressed Tunku Abdul Rahman during his visit to Indonesia the following year, as cited above.

Obviously Malay nationalists, regardless of their ideological stands, still looked to Indonesia as the model for the cultural framework of the would-be independent Malaya. Unsurprisingly, what happened in Indonesia had its own resonance in Malaya. For example, the arts polemic between the members of LEKRA and the signatories of Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang in the 1950s had its echo in Malaya, when the manifesto of ASAS 50, which paralleled LEKRA's, was challenged by the 'art for art's sake' manifesto launched by Hamzah, a former member of ASAS 50.

The polemic was indicative of the internal conflict within ASAS 50. Maman notes that most members of ASAS 50 were young writers who were sympathizers of radical Leftist political parties such as Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM) and Angkatan Pemuda Insyaf (API). They were enthusiastic about promoting and employing literature as an instrument for political struggle, as seen in the slogan of 'arts for society'. Asraf, one of the proponents of this manifesto, for example, was consistent with this concept. He observed that what Chairil Anwar and Idrus of Indonesia's 'Angkatan 45' had done was a good example for Malay writers for ways to reform the Malay language and literature. The best way for undertaking reform for the sake of the progress of the Malays was through literature being concerned with the life of the people (Maman S. Mahayana 2001:214-5), in the sense of the poor or the working class Malays as mentioned earlier.

To some members of ASAS 50 such as Hamzah and Rosmera, even though the Malay interpretation of 'the people' was not completely the same as the 'people' defined by LEKRA, such a literary manifesto tended towards communism – the ideology that had been suppressed by the British since the imposition of Emergency in 1948. Hamzah subsequently resigned from ASAS 50. Then he formed Angkatan Persuratan Melayu Baharu (PMB, New Malay Literary Association) in September 1954. Malay writers joining this association were Rosmera, M.S. Haliza, Abdul Salam Ayub, Aebe Muara, Amin Jaya, and Abdul Ghani Hamid. The central aim of this association was the promotion of a Malay literature referring to Islam (Maman S. Mahayana 2001:217).

The UMNO's domination on the political and cultural stages and the internal conflict within ASAS 50 later caused the activities of this association to decline around the mid-1950s, despite its influence which was said to continue to reflect the Malay literary world in subsequent years. In addition, after the Federation of Malaya gained its independence in 1957, the centre of cultural activism moved (back) to Kuala Lumpur. Many Malay writers left Singapore for Kuala Lumpur. Now under the UMNO's brand of Malay nationalism, Malay writer-activists, regardless of their kind of nationalist aspiration, performed their work with a more nationalistic tone. It is questionable how they then perceived Indonesia.[26] I will now discuss the 'exchange' of Malay and Indonesian writers before and after 'Confrontation', when Soekarno 'challenged' the existence of the Malaysian Federation.

THE 'EXCHANGE' OF MALAY AND INDONESIAN WRITER-ACTIVISTS BEFORE AND AFTER 'CONFRONTATION'

In a relatively brief period, the attainment of Malayan independence on 31 August 1957 was followed by the formation of the administratively untidy grouping of the Straits Settlements (Penang–Malacca–Singapore), the Federated and Unfederated Malay States and the diverse communities therein. They came together in a moment of nationhood. The new nation's leaders had close links with the old Malay aristocratic elites, or had been nurtured by the British for leadership roles. The arrangements they made between themselves were designed to fulfil the British demand for racial harmony and took the form of power sharing in the new parliament. However, as Hooker notes, true multiracialism was not achieved. None of the Alliance partners (UMNO and its alliances from the non-Malay-based-political parties) consistently represented the interests of their weaker constituents (Hooker 2003:207-8).

26 However, the newly independent Malayan Federation government continued to put Indonesia as its close ally. In early September 1957, a cultural mission toured Indonesia, including Yogyakarta where a Friendship Association between Malaya and Indonesia based on Islam was established. See the news section ('Berita kebudayaan') of *Budaya* 10 (Oktober 1957):444. While in the following year, the Federation of Malaya government sent seven Malay teachers to take an Indonesian language course in Indonesia for six months. They reportedly said that the Indonesian language was the language of science and culture; while the education ministers of Indonesia and the Federation of Malaya held a meeting in November 1958 assuring the cooperation of both countries in language, education and culture. See the news section of *Budaya* 11-12 (December 1958):476-7.

Such a political configuration left a space for the Leftist ideas to survive. Partly this was because the mood of the times was anti-imperialism. Even the 1960s threw up an idealistic and romantic generation of young Malay leftwing intellectuals, who impressed the public with their selflessness and dedication to a worldwide cause to bring about political justice, equality and a 'brave new world'. They comprised students, journalists, writers, lawyers and trade unionists (Cheah Boon-Kheng 2006:638).

Many of the Malay Leftists had been politically 'Indonesia oriented'. They still intensively observed and took inspiration from what happened in Indonesia to develop their own ideas and actions for what they believed to be the welfare of Malayan people. Such a stand must have put them in trouble, since independent Malaya was in search of its own 'national identity', refusing to be the shadow and echo of other nations, including Indonesia.

Ironically, especially as occurred with Samad Ismail, it was such a Malay 'Indonesia-oriented' Leftist nationalist who later played an important role in silently bridging non-formal diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Indonesia when the Indonesia's campaign to 'crush Malaysia' called 'Confrontation' broke out.[27] The story began in early 1957, prior to the Malayan independence, when Yusof Ishak, *Utusan Melayu*'s managing editor and editor-in-chief, moved the newspaper to Kuala Lumpur. Everyone assumed that Samad would be running the paper. Instead, Ishak assigned him to be *Utusan*'s correspondent in Indonesia. According to Samad, Ishak told him 'I'm sorry, you can't go to Kuala Lumpur. If you go to Kuala Lumpur, Tunku will close down my paper.' So, says Samad, 'I went off quietly to Jakarta' (Rush n.d.).

In Indonesia, Samad was warmly welcomed by his old comrades. Adam Malik arranged for an office for him at Antara, the government news agency, and also a place to live. He introduced him to a number of leading political figures. This 'exile' gave him an opportunity to see independent Indonesia firsthand. He travelled extensively, and he was very disturbed and disillusioned to witness the poverty (Rush n.d.), indicating that he had some emotional attachment with Indonesia.[28]

27 In the remarks of R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy (1986:155), the Indonesian objection was ideological rather than legal. President Soekarno saw the Malaysia proposal as a 'neocolonialist' scheme hatched by the British, whose troops were still in Malaya, thus proving that the country was not yet really independent.

28 In fact, his sympathy to Indonesia had been shown years earlier. In his position as the editor of *Utusan Melayu* in late 1940s, he laid down certain conditions. One of them was that *Utusan Melayu* should no longer describe Indonesian freedom fighters as *pengganas* or 'terrorists'; that *Utusan* must give full support to the Indonesian struggle for independence, and that it must give equal treatment to news about the left wing movement in the country. See Hamidah bte Haji Hassan 1987:41.

In 1963, the already independent Federation of Malaya merged with the locally self-governing but not yet independent Singapore and two British colonies on Borneo (Sarawak and Sabah) to form Malaysia. This new and largely unanticipated entity altered the evolving political equation profoundly. Moreover, President Soekarno assailed the new Malaysian state as a neocolonial deception designed to extend British imperial power in the region indefinitely. Launching the so-called Confrontation, he vowed to destroy the new Malaysia (Rush n.d.).

Samad's close links to Tun Abdul Razak, the Tunku's deputy premier, placed him as the deputy premier's personal aide concerning the Indonesia problem. Working outside official channels, he contacted leaders of several non-aligned countries[29] – Soekarno's assumed allies – and asked for their support for Malaysia. Through Adam Malik and other contacts in Indonesia, he also learned and passed along to worried Malaysian leaders, the news that Soekarno lacked support among significant elements of the Indonesian power structure for his assault on Malaysia. Indeed, when Soekarno was overthrown in 1965, Confrontation was immediately abandoned by Indonesia's new military rulers (Rush n.d.). As the 'hidden' bridge between the two countries had been laid down by Samad Ismail, the normalization of the diplomatic relation of the two countries was just a matter of time.

Samad's case shows a paradox. His Leftist nationalist stance and close links with Indonesia had put him in trouble in the context of the nation building project of the newly independent Malaya. However, in the time of crisis during the 'Confrontation' epoch, it was such a stance that made him play an important role in keeping contacts and building a silent diplomatic channel with Indonesia, so that the relations between the two countries was not trapped in total hostility.

On the other hand, as noted by Ahmad Kamal Abdullah, the presence of a number of (non-Leftist) Indonesian writers in Malaya in the early 1960s due to the dominance of LEKRA's politics of authorship and to the PKI's close link to Soekarno, maintained the cultural link of Malaya–Indonesia. These writers included Idrus, M. Balfas, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, and Mochtar Lubis. They associated well with Malay writers. Idrus made a dis-

29 Indonesia's hostility revealed how badly Malaya was in need of additional contacts and friends. Indonesia had used international conferences to urge its case against the formation of Malaysia and lobbied so successfully at the Afro-Asian Conference held in Tanganyika (later Tanzania) in 1963 that the delegation from Malaya-Singapore failed even to get seated (Milne and Mauzy 1986:155).

cussion group consisting of Malay writers, in which he gave a series of talks on the philosophy of aesthetics. He even republished some of the works of Amir Hamzah such as *Njanyi sunji* (Soliloquy) and *Buah rindu* (The fruit of a longing) in Malaya (Ahmad Kamal Abdullah 2006:70), in addition to founding a publishing house, one of its publications being *Jenaka* magazine. He also published his own anthology of short stories, *Dengan mata terbuka* (With open eyes) (1961) and a novel entitled *Hati nurani manusia* (Human conscience) (1963). Both harshly criticized the corruption and the political patronage of business in Indonesia (Hill 2006:2-3). While M. Balfas, before moving to Australia to teach, actively assisted Keris Mas to run *Dewan Pelajar*, a special magazine for young children published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka; and St. Takdir Alisjahbana was the head of the department of Malay Studies at the Malaya University (Ahmad Kamal Abdullah 2006:71-2).

Meanwhile, Mochtar Lubis used the opportunity of his 'exile' in Kuala Lumpur to publish his novel *Sendja di Djakarta* (Twilight in Jakarta) (1964). In fact he wrote the draft of this novel when he was under house detention in Jakarta in late 1950s. As it could not be published in Indonesia because it sharply criticized the corrupted Indonesian political life under the leadership of Soekarno, he sent it to London and Claire Holt translated it into English. It was first published in London in 1963 and in New York the following year. In the same year it was published in Kuala Lumpur in its Indonesian version, while its publication in Indonesia had to wait another six years (Hill 2006:3).

When diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Indonesia were normalized in 1966, the flow of Indonesian writers to Malaysia increased. Many Indonesian scholars played an important role in the formation of the first state university in Malaysia after independence, namely the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in early 1970s. Meanwhile many Malaysian students were sent to Indonesia for their tertiary education.

CLOSING REMARKS

Given the two-directional traffic of writer-activists between Malay(si)a and Indonesia at times of crisis, writers could play an important role in bridging the political tension of the two countries. Writers could represent a sort of alternative image of their home country. As noted above, the presence and activism of non-Leftist Indo-

nesian writers such as Idrus and M. Balfas in Malaya could build an image that not all Indonesian cultural workers had a sense of hostility to Malaysia. While Samad's frequent visits to and stay in Indonesia could build an image among Indonesians that not all Malaysian cultural workers were supportive of the so-called British neo-colonialism project through the formation of Malaysia.

Such an exchange of 'ideologically marginalized' writers at times of crisis was only possible when the cultural traffic and links of the two countries had long historical precedent. As mentioned above, the history of the links between Malay[sian] and Indonesian modern literatures can be traced back to the mid-1920s. In the case of Malaya–Indonesia cultural links and traffic from 1920s to 1965, one might say that initially it was through literature that political influences were transmitted from Indonesia to Malaya, and finally that it was by writer-activists of the two countries that political tension between the two countries was partly resolved. In short, writer-activists could play a role as negotiators of the tension between the two siblings; or it was these writer-activists that made the two countries like siblings, as it was through literature that the idea of '*bangsa serumpun*' was enlivened.

As stated at the outset, this chapter focuses on the Malay writers, particularly the Malay Left writers and their links and orientation to Indonesia. The picture revealed is complex enough, yet it is only one part of an even larger picture. This essay has not discussed the Chinese writers, who might have had their own links to both the Malays and Indonesians, which is another important aspect of cultural networking around the Malacca Strait. Nor has it focused on the networking of forms of culture other than literature at this time. These are subjects left for others to pursue.

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7

A bridge to the outside world
Literary translation in Indonesia, 1950-1965

Maya H.T. Liem

Literary translation has played an important role in the cultural development of new states.[1] In the case of Indonesia in the period between 1950 and 1965, matters related to culture figured prominently in the efforts of both government and civil society to construct a national identity for Indonesia as a modern, independent nation free from Dutch colonialism. Both internally and in the eyes of the world at large, cultural identity was seen as the mark of a strong and established state, and in the building of culture, the development of a national literature was an area that attracted significant attention. Models of literary expression were often drawn from foreign sources, and this meant that a large number of Indonesian writers found themselves engaged in the business of literary translation. It is noteworthy that throughout this period, the Indonesian government itself took no active role in sponsoring literary translation, leaving this aspect of cultural traffic between Indonesia and the outside world entirely in the hands of writer/translators as individuals.

The Cold War context in which the literary translations of this period took place meant that translation was not only an opening to the outside world on the part of Indonesian writer/translators themselves. It was also a means by which foreign powers were able to spread the cultural principles and ideologies that underlay their attempts to gain political advantage and influence in the newly emerging states of the post-war era. As Hong Liu (2006:186-91) has shown in his study of the PRC's cultural diplomacy towards Indonesia between 1949 and 1965, the government of the PRC

1 I wish to thank Koesalah Soebagyo Toer for his generous assistance, his constant availability for interviews and his provision of additional information during the writing of this essay. I am also deeply grateful to Shannu (Tan To or Zhan Hu) and Winarta for their willingness to be interviewed for this project.

channelled large numbers of books (including works of literature) and other printed material to Indonesia during this period, as part of its propagation of the success of the Chinese model of revolution and national development. At times the Chinese government involved Indonesian writer/translators in the work of translation into Indonesian, although most translated works came directly from Chinese translators in Beijing, adding to the efficiency with which the Chinese model was made available to the Indonesian reading public. Other prominent Cold War actors, such as the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites and Western powers like the United States, Great Britain and the former colonizing power the Netherlands, also made use of translation of literature and other types of reading material to promote their political and cultural interests in newly-independent Indonesia.

In this essay, I aim to survey the world of literary translation in post-independence Indonesia, showing how individual translators with different backgrounds and motivations approached the production of translated works of literature. As the essay shows, whether consciously or not, these individual translators were not only engaged in producing models of creative writing for modern Indonesian writers; they were also building frameworks for communication between Indonesia and the outside world within the workings of Cold War cultural diplomacy. I begin with an exploration of the overall context of literary translation, in order to construct a picture of the networks, policies and ideologies that lay behind the production of literary translations. I then move to a discussion of the work of two prominent translators of the period, Trisno Sumardjo and Koesalah Soebagyo Toer. Trisno Sumardjo (1916-1969) was a painter and a creative writer who was an adherent of the principles of universal humanism (see Keith Foulcher in this volume), but he was also a renowned translator, best known for his translations of Shakespeare. Koesalah Soebagyo Toer (b. 1935), younger brother of the writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer, is known for his translations of novels and short stories from Russia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. He began to study Russian in the late 1950s, first in Jakarta and later in the Soviet Union.

The questions to be addressed in this essay include the types of works chosen for translation, the methods of selection, personal motivations and the networks that supported the process of selection. Also taken into consideration are the production, distribution and reception of translations both domestically and internationally.

Apart from the two translators selected for special attention here, there were also a significant number of other professional lit-

erary translators in Indonesia during the 1950-1965 period, including Asrul Sani, Siti Nuraini, Muhamad Radjab and Toto Sudarto Bachtiar. The scope of this essay does not permit a comprehensive treatment of all these translators and their works, but I hope that by choosing to focus on Trisno Sumardjo and Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, two prominent translators with differing orientations, I will be able to give a preliminary indication of the role played by translators and their works in constructing a cultural bridge between Indonesia and the rest of the world during the Cold War period.

BEFORE 1950

Translations from foreign literature have been part of modern Indonesian culture since the Dutch colonial period. Individual translators, drawn from the ranks of specialists and government officials, writers, journalists, teachers, or those who worked in a number of these professions at the same time, began to emerge in colonial society from the 1870s. The motivations that inspired these early translators were varied, from a desire to introduce indigenous readers to the outside world through Western European perspectives, to educative intentions or pure entertainment. Most of the earliest translations were adventure stories, such as *Hikajat Robinson Crusoe* (*Robinson Crusoe*), a rendition of the eighteenth-century classic by Daniel Defoe, *Kisah pelajaran nachoda Bontekoe* (The voyage of captain Bontekoe), Von de Wall's adaptation of the journal Bontekoe kept of his voyage to the East Indies in 1618-1625, and the works of Jules Verne. At the end of the nineteenth century more politically motivated translations began to appear, such as F. Wiggers's translation of Melati van Java's *Dari boedak sampe djadi radja* (From slave to king), which showed more sympathy for a Javanese rebel than the Dutch authorities he opposed.[2]

It was also at this time that a number of Sino-Malay translators began to make their presence felt in the publishing world of the Dutch East Indies. They began with translations from Chinese, but increasingly moved to translations from English and French literature. As was the case with the pioneering translators of the 1870s,

2 Jedamski 2009:173-5. See also Jedamski (2002), for a discussion of translations and adaptations based on *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Sherlock Holmes*, which were highly popular in the Dutch East Indies from the end of the nineteenth century. According to Jedamski (2002:21), these translations encouraged discussion of issues related to individual responsibility, changes in morality and social norms and the position of indigenous societies in the colonial world.

they worked as individuals, establishing links with Sino-Malay magazines and the increasing number of publishing houses being established by Indies Chinese entrepreneurs (Jedamski 2009:183-8). The selection of works for translation was mostly based on commercial considerations, but the educative potential of a particular text in the transformation of the Dutch East Indies into a modern society also came into consideration.

With the establishment of the colonial government's Commissie voor de Volkslectuur in 1908 (which in 1917 became Balai Poestaka), competition ensued between the translators who worked for Chinese commercial publishers and those who worked for the government bureau, who were mostly indigenous. The government translators were not only full-time employees who received a regular stipend, but they were also given in-house training in the work of translation. They produced translations of works selected by the Dutch directors of the bureau in line with the political interests of the colonial government. Meanwhile, the independent publishers, whose loyalty to the colonial authorities was suspect, were subjected to strict supervision, which frequently resulted in their sidelining in the marketplace, or even their closure. This meant that as time went on, the business of translation passed increasingly into the hands of the Dutch East Indies government, even though the majority of the translators themselves were drawn from indigenous Indonesian society.

AFTER 1950

After Independence, Balai Pustaka came under the authority of the Republic of Indonesia, with part of its staff continuing on as employees of the Indonesian government. According to H.B. Jassin (1984:27), by 1947 there was discontent among staff over pay rates, with a number of staff who worked on the Balai Pustaka magazine *Pantja Raja* (1945-1947) resigning and going in search of alternative employment.[3] Others left because they

3 In a letter to Aoh K. Hadimadja (25-3-1947), Jassin wrote that among others, Sukmono, Nurdin, Markum and Pak Darma had resigned from Balai Pustaka in protest at the levels of pay offered by the institution. ('Markum akan pergi pula, karena tidak bisa hidup dengan gaji R 150 yang sepuluh hari sudah habis. [...] Pak Darma pun sudah pindah kerja ke Merdeka kembali, di mana dia digaji R 350, meninggalkan yang R 70 di Balai Pustaka.' 'Markum is going as well, because he can't live on a monthly wage of Rp 150, which doesn't last ten days. [...] Pak Darma has already gone back to *Merdeka*, where he is on a wage of Rp 350 in contrast to the Rp 70 he was getting at Balai Pustaka.')

were unwilling to support an institution that was a relic of the colonial system. Independent art and culture magazines were springing up everywhere at this time, with publications from the revolutionary period, like *Bintang Merah* (1945-1965), *Pembangoenan* (1945-1947), *Mimbar Indonesia* (1947-1966), *Siasat* (1947-1961), and *Mutiara* (1949-1950), followed in the early 1950s by other magazines like *Budaya* (1950-1964), *Basis* (1951-1982), *Duta Suasana* (1951-1956), *Konfrontasi* (1954-1960), *Zaman Baru* (1955-1965), and at the end of 1950s – early 1960s by *Pandji Masjarakat* (1959-2001), *Sastra* (1961-1969) and *Gema Islam* (1962-1967). With the advent of these outlets, all of them centred in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, intellectuals, artists, writers and translators were able to work completely independent of government interference and make their own individual contributions to the formation of a post-colonial Indonesian culture and identity.[4]

Balai Pustaka made a serious effort to revitalize itself, publishing its own new journal *Indonesia*, which, like other journals of the time made space available for translated short stories.[5] But Balai Pustaka no longer enjoyed the pre-eminent market position it had occupied before 1945. It continued to publish literary translations, but in far smaller numbers than during the colonial period. It now had to compete with private publishers like Pembangunan and Jajasan Pembaruan, which, in the eyes of many writers and translators were more aggressive business operations and more attuned to the financial situation of their authors and translators. Pembangunan, which came into existence in 1940 as Opbouw-Pembangoenan, was one of the most important Indonesian publishing houses of the 1950s. Known as Pembangunan from 1949, it was a regular publisher of both classical and modern literature.[6] Jajasan Pembaruan was established in 1951 and was affiliated to the Partai Rakjat Indonesia (PRI, Indone-

4 For detailed studies on the content of two of these magazines, including their role as outlets for the publication of literary translation, see the contributions by Els Bogaerts and Keith Foulcher to this volume.

5 The journal *Indonesia* (originally named *Indonesia, Madjalah Kebudajaan*) was published by Balai Pustaka from 1949-1950, then subsequently by Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia from June-July 1950-1952. From 1952, the journal *Indonesia* was published by the Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (BMKN, Council for Deliberations on National Culture). See further 'Notes on Indonesian journals and newspapers cited in this volume' at this back of this book.

6 In a letter to Trisno Sumardjo in 1949, Jassin (1984:61) suggested that Sumardjo send his translations of Shakespeare either to Balai Pustaka or Opbouw[-Pembangoenan] which was also seeking translators for the classics. One of its directors was Soedjatmoko.

sian People's Party).[7] It was established to promote the translation and circulation of 'Marxist' and 'leftist' books in Indonesia, and included among its staff four Indonesian and foreign translators whose job was to translate from English and Dutch, and occasionally other languages as well (Ibarruri Sudharsono 2009: 704-5). Its publications included translations of works by Friedrich Engels, Maxim Gorky, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Lin Ji-Tjou, Kim Il Sung; translations of foreign literature by Boris Polewoi, Maxim Gorky, N. H. Krupskaya; as well as works by D.N. Aidit and LEKRA writers like H.R. Bandaharo, Bachtiar Siagian, and Zubir A.A. It had bookshops in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya, and agents in Bandung and Medan. Other shops in Jakarta also sold its books.[8]

In Jassin's view, literary life in Jakarta at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s was growing apace.[9] His evaluation was based on the healthy growth of new magazines, a broadening and deepening cultural knowledge, a growing number of new young writers and a standard of writing that was 'no cause for embarrassment'.[10] But the growth of literary life was taking place in highly unfavourable economic conditions. The only writers who were in receipt of a monthly income were those lucky enough to secure positions on the editorial boards of the new magazines. Even they sometimes worked on more than one publication, and those with a talent for writing or translating had to keep up a constant output of publications to be able to fulfil their basic needs, which at the time required an income of Rp 700 per month.[11] Honoraria offered by newspapers and magazines at this time varied considerably. In the mid-1950s a chief editor received around Rp 230 per month, while payment for a short story or a

7 Although it published work by left-wing authors, it was not associated with the Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture), which had its own publications division (Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin Dahlan 2008:465, 470).

8 See 'Jajasan "Pembaruan"', *Harian Rakjat*, 1-1-1960. Pramoedya Ananta Toer published a positive evaluation of Jajasan Pembaruan in *Harian Rakjat*, 19-3-1955.

9 In this respect, Jassin disagreed with Soedjatmoko, who argued that Indonesian literature at this time was facing a crisis (Ajip Rosidi 2008:108-9). See also Hong Liu (2006:182-6) for an analysis of the 'crisis in literature' as part of the search for a national cultural identity among Indonesian intellectuals.

10 Jassin 1984:28-9. Jassin used the words 'no cause for embarrassment' ('*tidak memalukan*') in relation to an essay by Ida Nasution, but he also held the view that the decline of the magazine *Pudjangga Baru* did not mean a concomitant decline in the quality of Indonesian literature. He believed that good quality works would continue to surface, indicating the strength of the new Indonesian literary tradition (Jassin 1984:12).

11 Ajip Rosidi (2008:139) writes that when he began working at Balai Pustaka in 1955, his monthly honorarium was Rp 230, against a minimum monthly requirement of Rp 700.

translation varied between Rp 40 and Rp 200.[12] In the case of book length translations of literature, the translator normally received 10% of income from sales (Jassin 1984:49).

As these figures indicate, the writing of literature at this time was no basis for financial security. Readers, the government and publishers all paid little attention to creative writing. Under such conditions, Jassin's description of a thriving literary environment in post-war Jakarta seems somewhat surprising.

Throughout the 1950s, literary translators seem to have received little acknowledgement of their work. Except in the case of translators who were also prominent writers and poets, their names were often omitted from their published work. Acknowledged translators tend to be figures such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Trisno Sumardjo, H.B. Jassin, Mochtar Lubis, Asrul Sani, Siti Nuraini, Mohamad Rajab, Ramadhan K.H., Sitor Situmorang, Usmar Ismail, Hamka, Bahrum Rangkuti,[13] who are known primarily as creative writers and essayists. In the mid-1950s, a number of writers and translators voiced their concern at the lack of understanding of their work and the value of literary translation for independent Indonesia. In 1955, the prominent writer and translator Pramoedya Ananta Toer reiterated the dissatisfaction he had expressed at the 1952 National Culture Congress in Bandung concerning the government's neglect of a call by writers for protection of the rights of authors and translators.[14] Three years on, Pramoedya stated, the situation still had not improved, even though the government's own Council for Deliberations on National Culture (BMKN, Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional) had undertaken to award prizes for the best literary works (including translations). In 1956 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer expressed the view that the work of translators was a significant contribution to Indonesian society's understanding and familiarity with the thought worlds of other nations. In his view, translation was an art, requiring not only a mastery of language but an ability to move between two different worlds. A good translator needed training, and deserved the same level of recognition as that given to writers of original prose and poetry (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1956).

12 Ajip Rosidi (2008:122) notes that the new magazine *Prosa* offered Rp 200 to a recognized author for a short story, whether original or in translation. This was a large sum, compared to what other magazines offered, like *Siasat*'s Rp 40-50 and *Mimbar Indonesia*'s Rp 75. Only *Star Weekly* offered Rp 200.

13 On Bahrum Rangkuti and Hamka, see further Hairus Salim's contribution to this volume.

14 See 'Pramoedya Ananta Toer tentang Jajasan Pembaruan', *Harian Rakjat*, 19-3-1955.

Publishers too paid little attention to translation. Balai Pustaka no longer regarded translation as a significant part of its output, and among all Indonesian publishers only Jajasan Pembaruan had recognized the rights of translators and the importance of translations from world literature, regardless of length. For example, it had supported Pramoedya through his 717-page translation of Gorky's *Mother*.[15] It was also Jajasan Pembaruan's practice, unlike that of other publishers, to approach translators directly with specific requests for translation, rather than waiting for translators to offer their work for publication. For example, on one occasion marking the anniversary of the founding of LEKRA, Jajasan Pembaruan's representative Samanjaya (Oei Hai Djoen) approached Shannu (Tan To or Zhan Hu in Mandarin), asking for suggestions for a translation from Mandarin. Shannu – who claims to be the only Indonesian translator at the time who could undertake literary translation from Mandarin – suggested Jang Mo's *The song of youth*, which later appeared under the title of *Njanjian remadja* in 1961.[16]

Similar criticisms to those of Pramoedya were expressed by a reviewer of an exhibition of translations from world literature that was held in the STICUSA building in Jakarta in February 1956 (*Pameran kesusastraan dunia* 1956). Praising the decision to stage the exhibition, the writer of the review expressed disappointment at the small number of works of world literature that had been translated into Indonesian (and published as books), which was said to total no more than 120 books. Translations available were only the works of minor writers, with the great figures of world literature like Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Dante and modern writers like Thomas Mann still unknown in Indonesian. The reason for this situation was the neglect of Indonesian publishers, the majority of whom had no systematic programs of translation and were content to leave the selection of books for translation to the initiative of the translators themselves. This meant that in most cases, translation was confined to light reading that was easy and quick to translate, and, from the publishers' point of view, most likely to attract high sales figures. This was the situation that provoked Pramoedya's admiration for Jajasan Pembaruan, as the only Indo-

15 Pramoedya also translated a novel by the Russian writer Boris Polewoi, which appeared as the 440 page *Kisah manusia sedjati* (A genuine human being) (see 'Pramoedya Ananta Toer tentang Jajasan Pembaruan' di *Harian Rakjat*, 19-3-1955). According to Jajasan Pembaruan, 1000 copies of the translation were sold in two weeks, despite the inflated price of Rp 30 as a result of paper shortages ('Jajasan "Pembaruan"' *Harian Rakjat*, 1-1-1960).

16 Shannu, written communication, 2-2-2009.

nesian publisher prepared to commit funds to the translation of the works of major writers like Aragon, Camus and Gorky, regardless of length.

Overall, it appears that during the 1950s writers and translators took great interest in translating works of world literature into Indonesian. However the interest and enthusiasm of individual translators were often stymied by the low level of support they received from publishers, cultural organizations and the government. The only consistently available channel for the publication of literary translation was the proliferating number of independent journals managed by groups of writers and intellectuals with differing ideological and cultural outlooks. This situation appears to have been the case throughout the 1950s, and to have remained so until after 1965.

FOREIGN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

If Indonesian writers and translators in general felt that they gained no benefit from the internal cultural policies of their government, cultural diplomacy between Indonesia and the rest of the world at the time of the Cold War fostered their interest in world literature through an efficient system of book distribution from foreign publishers. Prominent Cold War actors like the PRC, the Soviet Union and the socialist states of Eastern Europe, and the Western capitalist bloc made up of the United States and the countries of Western Europe, all made use of art and culture (including literature) to raise their profiles and develop friendly relations with other countries at this time. In the case of the PRC, Nicolai Volland has written that the government made strenuous efforts to promote socialist principles and ideology through literature, and urged well-known writers to produce new works that advanced this cause (Volland 2008:53). As Hong Liu notes, these works were then translated into a variety of languages for circulation abroad, including in Indonesia. In the PRC, translation was centralized through the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing, which employed a number of local translators on its staff. Books in Indonesian represented the second largest category of its foreign language publications (Liu 2006:189-90). A similar situation prevailed in the Soviet Union after 1953, with the move to a more aggressive promotion of communist propaganda both at home and abroad after the death of Stalin in March of that year (Clews

1964:119; Ibarruri Sudharsono 2009:703-12). Beginning at this time, a large number of books in Russian were translated into a variety of other languages, especially English, by state publishers such as *Izdatelstvo literatuy na inostrannikh yazikah* (Publishing House for Literature in Foreign Languages), *Knizhny Mir* (publisher and bookstore) and Progress Publishers in Moscow (publisher and bookstore).[17] Distribution of books overseas was carried out through networks such as embassies, non-government organizations working with the governments of socialist countries, universities and particular bookshops. Books from the Soviet Union, mostly translated into English, reached Indonesians through a number of channels, including the Jajasan Pembaruan bookshops in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya and their agents.[18] Translations from the PRC were distributed through the International Book Company in Beijing, the PRC Embassy in Jakarta, bookshops owned by Chinese Indonesians, and affiliates of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) (Liu 1995:218).

The Indonesian government took a relaxed attitude towards the distribution networks for books from all overseas countries, especially when free copies were made available to government departments.[19] This meant that throughout the 1950-1965 period Indonesia remained wide open to the influences of ideas coming from abroad in the form of literary translation, especially where the socialist countries were involved.

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

Although their influence was limited, institutions representing overseas literary networks in Indonesia also played a part in encouraging translation into Indonesian, especially in the early 1950s.

17 Clews (1964:127) notes that from publications in 11 different languages intended for export in 1956, the languages of translation grew to 16 in 1958 and 25 in 1960. The number of books exported grew from 17,892,265 in 1956 to 40,113,400 in 1960. According to official figures only 4 titles in Indonesian were exported to Indonesia, a total of 34,500 books. The names of Russian publishers quoted here were supplied by Koesalah S. Toer in written communication, 27-9-2008.

18 *Harian Rakjat* regularly included Jajasan Pembaruan advertisements listing English translations of Soviet titles. These included works by Gorky, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev and Gribachov, among others.

19 Liu 1995:218. See also '507 buku pengetahuan dari Sovjet untuk Indonesia', *Harian Rakjat*, 22-1-1960.

STICUSA

Although official relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands came to an end with the acknowledgement of independence in 1949, Dutch cultural affairs continued to be represented in independent Indonesia through the activities of STICUSA (Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking, Foundation for Cultural Co-operation) (see the contribution by Liesbeth Dolk to this volume). As noted above, in February 1956, STICUSA held an exhibition in Jakarta of works of literature translated into Indonesian and Dutch, entitled 'World Literature in Translation'. The exhibition aimed to draw attention to the range of translations published in books available in the two languages at that time, even though STICUSA itself had played no part in their production. In his review of the exhibition H.B. Jassin (1956:12) noted that the number of literary translations from Dutch into Indonesian lagged far behind those from English, French and Russian. The Dutch poets of the [18]80s movement, De Tachtigers, who had been popular with the Pujangga Baru generation in pre-war Indonesia, remained untranslated, and there were only a few translations of poems by the modernist poets of the 1930s, Slauerhoff and Marsman, the work of the revolution era poet, Chairil Anwar. The Dutch Indies writer Edgar du Perron was minimally represented,[20] as was the Flemish writer Willem Elschot, through Idrus's translation of his short novel *Kaas* (*Cheese*). Even the great nineteenth-century classic *Max Havelaar*, which had been a favourite of the pre-war Indonesian nationalists, was only known in Indonesian through Haksan Wirasutisna's translation of a single extract, the famous story of Saidjah and Adinda. As Jassin (1956:17) pointed out, Dutch, along with English, German and (minimally) French, was a source language for translations into Indonesian, with translations of literature by writers from Russia, China, India, Arabia, Italy and Spain all based on their Dutch language versions. In this way, Dutch did play a part in introducing Indonesians to world literature, though Dutch literature itself remained underrepresented in Indonesian translation.

This situation appears to have changed little in the decade after 1956. A list of publications between 1945 and 1965 issued in Jakarta by the Indonesian Publishers' Association, IKAPI (IKAPI 1965)

20 Only one compilation of his short stories was translated by Sitor Situmorang under the title *Menentukan sikap* (Determining a stand) (1956) published by Van Hoeve.

suggests that there was no significant change in the number of literary translations in the period leading up to 1965. Throughout the period, the source languages for literary translation remained primarily English, Dutch, German and French, even though as noted above, Jang Mo's *The song of youth* appeared in 1961 as *Njanjian remadja*, and a volume of short stories by Lu Xun appeared in 1963, both translated from the original Mandarin by Shannu. The former was published by Jajasan Pembaruan, and the latter by LEKRA.

Given the large number of translations of Chinese literature into Indonesian by the Foreign Languages Bureau in Beijing, it should not be surprising that there was little translation from Mandarin in Indonesia itself. In the case of Russian, the ready availability of English translations of Russian literature also obviated the need for translations from the original language into Indonesian. In fact the only Indonesian to study Russian with a view to undertaking literary translation in the 1960-1965 period was Koesalah Soebagyo Toer. As he did not complete his translations of Russian literature from original sources in Moscow before 1965, these did not appear in Indonesian before the outbreak of the 1965 coup.[21]

FOREIGN EMBASSIES

In the early post-independence period, foreign delegations played an important role in channelling information about culture and cultural products between Indonesia and their home countries. In most cases, foreign embassies employed their own translating teams, most of whose work involved the translation of general information documents.[22] A number of embassies published their own magazines, as well as brochures for free distribution. Some examples of general information magazines published by foreign embassies in Indonesia are *American Miscellany*, *Pemandan-*

21 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, written and oral communication, 26-5-2008 and 11-2-2009.

22 For example, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, who worked as a translator in the Czechoslovakian embassy in Jakarta between 1957 and 1959, translated items such as descriptions of the city of Prague, Charles University, Hitler's razing of the town of Lidice after the attempted assassination of a Gestapo commander, trade between Czechoslovakia and the rest of the world, the composer Bedrich Smetana, a teacher of Indonesian in Prague named Miroslav Oplt, and Czech ceramics. Editorials from Indonesian newspapers like *Pedoman*, *Harian Rakjat*, and *Duta Masjarakat* were also translated into English (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, written communication, 31-5-2008).

gan Inggris, *India Panorama*, *Hongaria Baru*, *Tjekoslowakia Sekarang*, and *Negeri Soviet*.[23] In general, none of these publications included translations of literature. In this connection, the role of foreign embassies was confined to the provision of libraries open to the general public, or as distributors of books translated and published in their home countries.[24]

Foreign embassies were also active during this period in facilitating links with Indonesian artists and making recommendations to their governments concerning the issuing of invitations to visit their countries. In the case of embassies from socialist states, there were also instances of involvement in literary translation projects. For example, as part of an attempt to strengthen relations with Indonesian writers, the Chinese embassy undertook the translation of works by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Utuy Sontani and Abdul Muis into Mandarin, while the Russian embassy supported the translation into Russian of works by Abdul Muis, M. Dimyati, M.R. Dajoh and Pramoedya Ananta Toer.[25] Indonesian short stories, including works by Pramoedya and Suwarsih Djojopuspito, also appeared in Estonian translation, along with extracts from Marah Rusli's *Sitti Nurbaya* and Abdul Muis's *Suropati*.[26] It is most likely also that a few embassies established their own links with non-government organizations or local magazines that were in sympathy with what was occurring in their home countries.[27] There were also Mandarin publications in Jakarta, the weekly *Chiao Hsing* and the Jajasan Zamrud magazine *Peladjaran Bahasa Indonesia*, that included discussion and examples of

23 See Alexander K. Oglobin (2009:693) for information about the Soviet propaganda system applied in Indonesia.

24 For example, Winarta Adisubrata recalled in an interview (Jakarta, 7-12-2008) that he was a regular borrower of books from the well-stocked library of the British Embassy in Jakarta. On the Chinese embassy's role in book distribution, see Hong Liu (1995:217). Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Dahlan (2008:452) note that Jajasan Pembaruan was an agent for books imported from Eastern Europe and the Communist Bloc. Embassies of these countries most likely acted as distributors of these books.

25 Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin Dahlan 2008:452. Shannu (written communication, 14-2-2009) also noted the involvement of the Chinese embassy in translation from Indonesian. According to Koesalah S. Toer (interview, Depok, 17-9-2008), two of Pramoedya's novels, *Di tepi kali Bekasi* (On the banks of the Bekasi river) and *Keluarga gerilya* (The guerilla family) were translated into Russian.

26 See 'Pramudya Ananta Tur, Suwarsih Djojopuspito, Abdul Muis di tengah rakjat Estonia', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-2-1960.

27 Liu (1995:216) notes that the embassy of the PRC established links with the Indonesia-PRC Friendship Association. According to Koesalah Soebagyo Toer the same was true of the Soviet embassy's approach to the Indonesia-Soviet Cultural Relations Bureau (Badan Hubungan Kebudajaan Indonesia-Sovjet), an independent body that sympathized with the Soviet Union (interview, Depok, 17-9-2008).

Indonesian literature and which were distributed in the PRC as well as in Indonesia itself.[28]

CREATIVE WRITERS AND PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS

As mentioned above, the intensity with which literary translation into Indonesian was pursued during the 1950-1965 period was largely due to the individual efforts of authors and writers. They were inspired by a post-colonial spirit of freedom, the will to explore the freedom of the human spirit in an atmosphere of openness that marked the end of the restrictions colonialism had imposed on them. They were driven by an urge to make Indonesians familiar with the outside world through the medium of literature, introducing the heritage of world literature and its major writers, and making the thinking of prominent writers accessible to Indonesians who did not read foreign languages (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1956). But this spirit of freedom of exploration also involved a search for models for a free, secure and prosperous Indonesia in the future. In this respect, creative writers looked to translation, as much as their own original work, as a way of conveying ideas and concepts they regarded as important for their society. Trisno Sumardjo is an example of those artists who struggled for creative and intellectual freedom and physical and mental development as the basis of an independent and prosperous nation state. By contrast, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer is a professional translator who saw translation as a way of conveying the ideas of the great writers from socialist countries as part of a struggle that was more concerned with social and political change than creative freedom. For him, translation was a part of the struggle to win freedom for the oppressed.

TRISNO SUMARDJO (1916-1969)

Trisno Sumardjo is remembered as a painter and a creative writer as well as an art critic and a translator. He established a reputa-

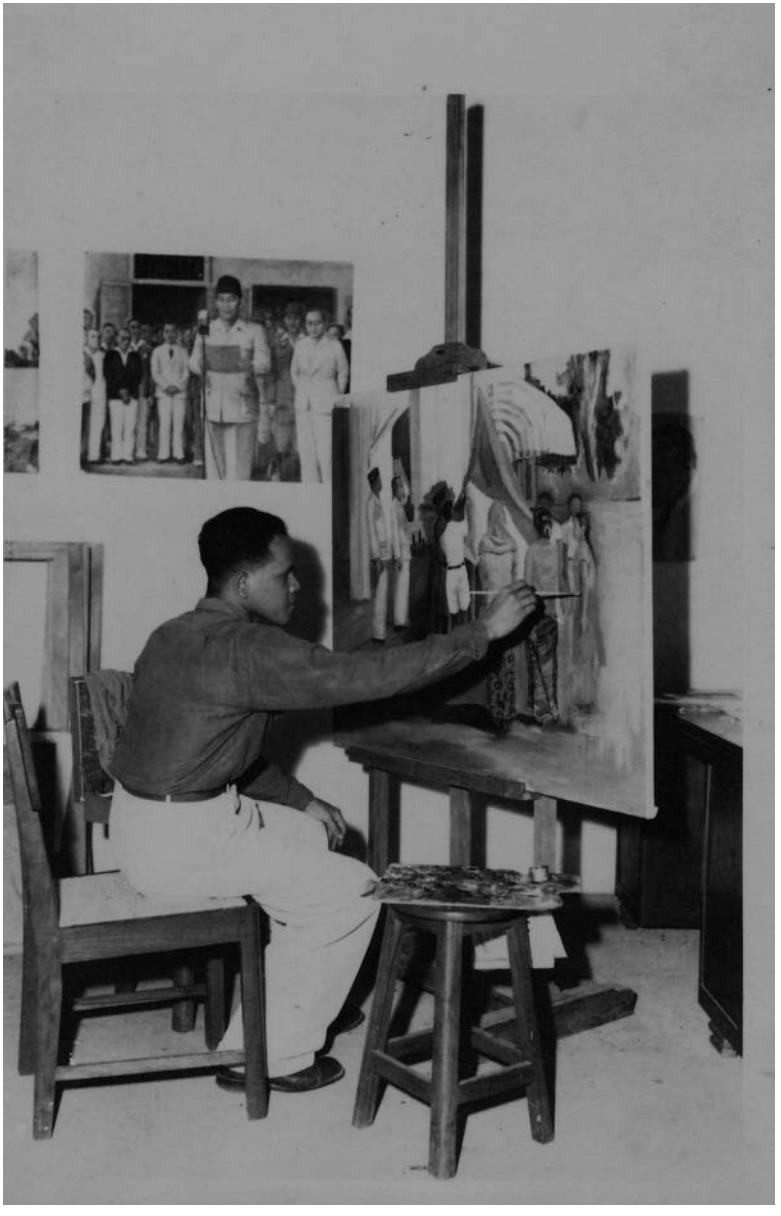
28 Shannu, written communication, (2, 12, 14 and 19 February 2009). Shannu worked as a journalist and editor for *Chiao Hsing* (Sadar) (under the leadership of Siauw Giok Tjhan) in Jakarta between 1957 and 1960. During this time he wrote regularly on Indonesian art and culture under pseudonyms including Shan and Hasanudin. See also Ibarruri Sudharsono (2009:711-2) for information about Jajasan Kebudajaan Sadar and the journal *Chiao Xing* or *Chio Hsing*.

tion as a translator through his translations of Shakespeare, which began in 1950 with the publication of *Hamlet* by PT Pembangunan, and continued right up until the serialization of his *Antonius dan Cleopatra* in *Indonesia Madjalah Kebudajaan* between October 1961 and June 1963.[29] He also translated Boris Pasternak's *Dokter Zhivago* (Djambatan, 1960),[30] and a collection of short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, *Death and mystery,* which is given the Indonesian title *Maut dan misteri* (Djambatan, 1969). At the same time, he also published translations of many short works of fiction in journals like *Konfrontasi*, *Indonesia*, *Sastra*, *Kisah*, *Mimbar Indonesia* and *Siasat*. The texts he selected for translation varied widely, both in terms of genre and geographic origin. They covered drama, poetry, the short story and the novel, and ranged from East and Southeast Asia (Japan, China, Vietnam, Burma, and the Philippines) to Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel), India, Europe (Italy, France, Germany, England and Russia) and the United States. The only restriction imposed on his choice of works for translation came from his knowledge of foreign languages, which was confined to English and Dutch. This meant that except in the case of original writing in these languages, all his translations were based on already translated texts.

Trisno Sumardjo was one of that generation of writers who came to maturity after the declaration of independence from the Dutch in 1945, and who were strongly committed to ideals of freedom. For him, this meant freedom from any kind of political direction of the arts, and an absolute commitment to freedom of thought and creativity. In Soekarno's Indonesia, this commitment led him to be a signatory of the Cultural Manifesto (Manifes Kebudajaan) of 17 August 1963, which directly challenged the direction of national cultural policy in the later years of the Guided Democracy period. Earlier, he had expressed a similar criticism of an exhibition of [socialist] realist art, arguing that the call for artists to take up the principles of [socialist] realism was a denial of the artist's fundamental freedom to explore the inner dimensions of human experience (Nashar 1985:22).

29 His other Shakespeare translations are *Saudagar Venezia* (*The merchant of Venice*) (Pembangunan, 1950), *Julius Caesar* (Pembangunan, 1951), *Macbeth* (Pembangunan, 1952), *Manasuka* (*As you like it*) (Balai Pustaka, 1952), *Prahara* (*The tempest*) (Balai Pustaka, 1952), *Impian di tengah musim* (*A midsummer night's dream*) (Balai Pustaka, 1955) and *Romeo dan Julia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1960).

30 The information provided by Ogloblin (2009:697), is rather confusing since it does not mention that Sumardjo's translation of the novel *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak (1960) was based on its English version, not the original Russian. The same can be said of other translations of Russian literature by M. Radjab, M. Taslim and Pramoedya Ananta Toer.



Trisno Sumardjo 1952. (Pusat Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin)

The eclecticism of his choice of texts for translation is testimony to his commitment to artistic freedom. In the introduction to a collection of translated short stories entitled *Tjerita dari Asia Afrika* (Stories from Asia Africa), published by the magazine *Sastra* in 1962, he wrote that the aim of the collection was 'to give the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of their fellow human beings',[31] implicitly endorsing the collection's non-partisan political nature and the concept of a universal humanity. At the time, this kind of approach ran counter to the political emphasis on solidarity with other newly independent states, but for Trisno and those like him, the significance of the end of colonialism was that the new climate of freedom enabled the development of 'a humanity that was so neglected by the colonizer'[32]. His concept of solidarity was the solidarity of a common humanity between people who shared the same destiny, the same aspirations, and the same experience of joy and suffering. For him, literature and art in general offered a means of knowing and experiencing humanity in its fullest sense.

It was on the basis of this conception of art and literature that Trisno became a signatory of the Cultural Manifesto, at a time when he felt that social and political pressures were impinging on his freedom to write and speak out. Along with other signatories to the Manifesto, he saw the document as a protest against the subordination of culture to politics and other socially-based forces (Sukito 1988). In his article *Seni dan masjarakat* (Art and society), Trisno made clear that he rejected the use of art and culture as a tool of political propaganda (Trisno Sumardjo 1960). As early as 1957, he was one of a small number of Indonesian artists and intellectuals to return from a visit to the People's Republic of China with very negative impressions of Chinese motives in inviting delegations of overseas writers to observe the situation of writers in the PRC. In a report of his visit (Trisno Sumardjo 1957, 1958) he wrote that there were 'political-psychological factors' underlying the invitation, and that the Chinese aim had been to 'turn out' new members of the Communist Party in their home country.

Surviving examples of Trisno's letters, as well as his published writing, make clear that his thinking about art and literature was already well-formed by the time Indonesian cultural political debates reached their critical point in the late 1950s and early

31 '[m]enterdjemahkan tjerita-tjerita dari Asia-Afrika adalah mengantar pembatja ke hati sesama manusia' (Trisno Sumardjo 1962:15). For a further example of Trisno Sumardjo's thinking about art and humanity see Trisno Sumardjo 1949-50.

32 '[p]eri-kemanusiaan jang begitu banjak diabaikan oleh pendjadjah' (Trisno Sumardjo 1962:15).

1960s. Between around 1933 and 1950, when he was still in Solo, Central Java, he was already conceiving freedom of artistic expression as the freedom to explore the modern world in all its diversity. His education had opened his mind to the richness of art and literature beyond what he felt to be the confines of his immediate environment, including – from an early age – making him an admirer of Shakespeare. In a letter to H.B. Jassin, dated 7 January 1950, he complained about the feeling of being physically and spiritually 'constricted' in the 'hinterlands' of Solo and Yogyakarta.[33] He dreamed of coming into contact with the freedom of the modern world in Jakarta and overseas, dreams that he realized in 1950 with his move to Jakarta and a Rockefeller Foundation grant that enabled him to make a six months' visit to the United States and Western Europe (London, Amsterdam, Paris and Rome) in 1952. After visiting a number of museums and artists' exhibitions in New York, Boston and Chicago (such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum and the Brooklyn Museum), he expressed surprise at having found so much European art and so much American art that was derivative of the work of European painters.[34] He was also disappointed to see so much art that was a 'statement of a sterile personality' and so much influence of 'an artificial way of life, full of intellectual calculations that were officially inculcated into the minds of artists during their training'.[35] He concluded that culture of this kind held little that was of value, and grew in his self-confidence and belief in his own strengths as an Indonesian artist. As such, his commitment to artistic 'freedom' was clearly based on his sense of identity as an Indonesian artist, rather than, as his ideological opponents would have it, a deracinated and politically suspect 'cosmopolitanism'. This was the basis of his involvement in national cultural life, as General Secretary of the Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (BMKN, Council for Deliberations on National Culture) in Jakarta between 1956 and 1969 and Head of the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (DKJ, Jakarta Arts Council) between 1967 and 1969, the year of his death. It was the same commitment that he brought to his work as a translator, valuing all literary works, because the products of creative freedom always served to raise levels of human dignity and the dignity of nations.

33 This letter is part of the collection held by the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre in Jakarta.

34 Letter to H.B. Jassin from New York, 5-2-1952, held in the collection of the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre, Jakarta.

35 Letter to H.B. Jassin from Chicago, 4-3-52, held in the collection of the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre, Jakarta.

KOESALAH SOEBAGYO TOER (B. 1935)

Koesalah Soebagyo Toer has been actively involved in translation since 1952, when he was still a student in senior high school. Initially, he translated solely from English, but in 1963 he began to produce translations from Russian, and from 1978 until the present he has also translated from Dutch.

In general, Koesalah has chosen works for translation on his own initiative, publishing his translations in various magazines, including *Kisah*, *Merdeka*, *Pewarta PPK*, *Brawidjaja* and *Pemuda*. His serialized translation *Nicola Suhaj, penjamun* (Nicola Suhaj, a thief), from a novel by Ivan Olbracht, was published in the newspaper *Bintang Timur* in 1960. In some cases he has translated works suggested to him by his brother Pramoedya, or co-translated with Pramoedya, as in collections of short stories by Tolstoy and Chekhov. The Tolstoy collection, entitled *Tjerita-tjerita Sebastopol* (Sebastopol stories), was published in *Pemuda* between February 1956 and June 1957. The Chekhov collection, which existed of eight stories, was enti-

Koesalah Soebagyo Toer at School 93 in Moscow, attending 'Indonesia Day' on 9 April 1962. From left to right: I Ketut Sunatera (back), a student (front), Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, A.G. Lordkipanidze, Rusdi Harmain, Asahan Aidit, and three students from School 93. (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer)

tled *Pertaruhan* (The wager), and was published by LEKRA in 1960. After he established a reputation as a translator, various publishers, such as Jajasan Pembaruan, commissioned translations from him. Apart from the titles just mentioned, his book length translations include *Hari-hari Oktober* (October days), from the work of Nadezhda Krupskaya (Jajasan Pembaruan, 1957), *Pemberontakan dipelabuhan* (Revolt in the harbour), a collection of short stories by Rumanian writer Alexandru Sahia (1960), and *Tjerita-tjerita tjinta* (Love stories), a collection of short stories by Lin Yu Tang, which remained unpublished for unknown reasons.

As a member of one of Indonesia's most famous literary families,[36] Koesalah had access to the literary world through the networks that Pramoedya was a part of in the early 1950s. In 1952, Pramoedya set up a literary agency Mimbar Penjiaran DUTA with the aim of collecting articles on topics dealing with art, literature and culture and offering them to publishers both in Indonesia and in Singapore/Malaya in the form of a regular bulletin. Koesalah was asked to become secretary and general administrator of Mimbar Penjiaran DUTA, while he was still a student in senior high school. This gave Koesalah valuable experience of the Indonesian publishing world, because he was assigned to prepare each bulletin and deliver it to the offices of various magazines and newspapers in Jakarta. The contacts he established through this work facilitated his access to publication outlets for his own articles and translations.[37]

Koesalah's upbringing in a nationalist family that took an active part in the struggle for independence – he recalls the bitterness of seeing his family home ransacked and his father humiliated by Dutch police – strengthened his early commitment to defend the oppressed and fight against those who oppressed others. Adopting Soekarno's view of the contradiction between the forces of revolution (NEFO, New Emerging Forces) and the anti-revolutionary forces (OLDEFO, Old Established Forces), he identified with those who fought for revolution and defended the oppressed, which brought him into line with the socialist world. All his literary translations were of works from socialist countries, reflecting this commitment. In the introduction to his translation of Alexandru Sahia, *Pemberontakan dipelabuhan*, he wrote:

36 Apart from his older brother Pramoedya, Koesalah has two younger brothers who also published translations and original writing during the period under discussion. Walujadi Toer's translation of a work by Liu Pai Yu, entitled *Njala api di hadapan kita* (The flames ahead of us) appeared in *Bintang Timur* between 19 May and 4 July 1960, while Soesilo Toer published several short stories in *Gelanggang*, the cultural section of the magazine *Siasat*, for instance *Menderita* (Suffering) (1952a) dan *Pemukul kentong* (The gong beater) (1952b).

37 Koesalah S. Toer, written communication, 27-9-2008.

> As in other countries, in Rumania there are prominent writers who do not write just to pass the time, but on a much more convincing basis. Alexandru Sahia, whose short stories are collected here, is one of those writers. He writes to defend the interests of the people. [...] Apart from short stories, he also writes essays and articles.
>
> All his work is permeated by a strong conviction concerning the victory of the ideals of freedom, the victory of the struggle to eradicate the enslavement of some human beings by others. Sahia is aware of the negative consequences of the exploitation of workers, whatever their nationality might be. He knows about the miserable fate of the peasants. He understands a writer's duty. For that reason, his literary works go hand in hand with the desire of the majority of the people.[38]

There were also practical reasons why Koesalah confined his translations to works by writers from socialist countries. Literature from the countries of Eastern Europe was not bound by copyright, nor was it subject to the Bern Convention.[39] This made it freely available for translation, bound only by the moral obligation to spread the principles of socialist revolution. The same held true for works of Indonesian literature translated into Eastern European languages, because Indonesia was also not a signatory to the Bern Convention. Another consideration was the price of books. At the time, books from Western countries were very expensive, and there were restrictions on their import into Indonesia. For example, book orders from Britain (which were mainly school textbooks) had to be made through the British Council, and could take more than six months to arrive. When books did arrive, they were marketed through particular bookshops and always sold out in a very short time.[40] The high cost of (producing) books also

38 Seperti negeri2 jang lain, Rumaniapun mempunjai penulis2 terkemuka, jang menulis bukan hanja sekedar iseng, melainkan dengan dasar perdjuangan jang lebih mejakinkan. Alexandru Sahia jang tjerita2 pendeknja dimuat dalam buku ini, adalah salah seorang penulis Rumania terkemuka jang menulis untuk membela kepentingan Rakjat […]. Disamping tjerita pendek, Sahia adalah djuga penulis esei dan artikel.
Sekalian tulisannja mengandung kejakinan jang teguh akan menangnja tjita2 merdeka, menangnja dalam perdjuangan untuk melenjapkan perbudakan manusia oleh manusia jang lain. Sahia sadar akan segi buruk daripada penghisapan jang berlaku atas kaum pekerdja, dari kebangsaan apapun djuga. Iapun tahu akan melaratnja nasib kaum tani. Ia mengerti akan tugas seorang penulis. Karena itulah maka hasil2 karjanja rapat bergandengan dengan hasrat rakjat jang terbanjak (Sahia 1960:5).

39 International Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, signed in Bern in 1886.

40 In an interview (Depok, 17-9-2008), Koesalah mentioned the bookshop Pembimbing in Jalan Kebon Sirih in this connection. Rhoma D.A. Yuliantry and Muhidin Dahlan (2008:452) mention Pembimbing and Indira as suppliers of books from Western Europe and the United States.

meant that books that were translated tended to be short. A translator had to guard against rejection of manuscripts because of their length. *Pertaruhan*, Koesalah's translation of Chekhov, was specifically composed of short stories so that its page count would not be excessive.

As the 1960s approached, the flow of books from Eastern Europe to Indonesia increased significantly. Koesalah had no trouble obtaining these books, since between 1958 and 1960 he worked at the non-government Indonesia-Soviet Cultural Relations Bureau.[41] Many publications from Moscow were sent free of charge to this organization, which meant that Koesalah had easy access to books for translation.

In the difficult economic conditions of the time, it was common for individuals to work at more than one profession at the same time. Creative writers regularly supplemented their income working as translators or as magazine or newspaper editors. In this respect Koesalah was something of an exception, because apart from writing the occasional short story or essay, he remained primarily a professional translator. For him, the supplement to his income as a literary translator came from translating texts of non-fiction. His ideological sympathies led him to become a part-time translator at the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Jakarta where, as noted above,[42] he translated informational texts as well as editorials from Indonesian newspapers. No literary translation was involved, but the experience enriched his skills as a translator and increased his knowledge of Eastern Europe.[43]

His growing familiarity with the countries of Eastern Europe led Koesalah to take up the study of Russian, first at the Indonesian-Soviet Cultural Relations Bureau in 1959. Finally, at the age of 24, he secured a scholarship to study in Moscow, where he was a student in the Faculty of History-Philology at the Friendship of Nations University between 1960 and his graduation in 1965.[44]

41 See above, note 21.

42 See above, note 16.

43 Koesalah was introduced to the Czechoslovakian Embassy by his friend, the composer Subronto (also spelt Soebronto) K. Atmodjo, who worked at the embassy as a general assistant. Koesalah and Subronto were both members of the 'Gembira' Song and Dance Ensemble, which regularly represented Indonesia overseas (see the contribution by Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri in this volume). It was also Subronto who introduced Koesalah to Rumanian literature, and encouraged him to translate the work by Alexandru Sahia discussed above.

44 Koesalah states that between 1960 and 1965 there were 250 Indonesian students who enrolled at this university. In all, there were around 600 Indonesian students in the Soviet Union as a whole. Of these, only 30 returned to Indonesia in 1965 (interview, Depok, 17-9-2008). See also Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 2003.

Koesalah Soebagyo Toer after a Russian language class on 12 April 1961 with (left) Natella Aleksandrovna Neserova (phonetics teacher) and Sofia Ivanovna Pavlova (grammar teacher) holding a copy of the newspaper *Pravda*. (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer)

Koesalah recalls that his time in Moscow was full of job offers that added to his study commitments. From 1963 until just before his return to Indonesia in July 1965, he worked as a translator for the Novosti news bureau, not only compiling news broadcasts but also articles, commentaries, photo essays on aspects of Soviet politics at home and abroad, as well as reports on the Soviet economy and culture and general news items on Soviet life, for distribution in the Soviet Union and foreign countries.[45] This experience served to draw Koesalah ever more deeply into a system pervaded by socialist ideology. In the Soviet Union at the time it was considered a great honour to work for Novosti, because the news bureau was one of the foundations of socialism. Its employees not only enjoyed a high social standing, they also received a more than adequate financial return for their services. By the time he returned to Indonesia, Koesalah had saved the equivalent of ten times his monthly scholarship allowance, which was itself generous. In other words, and in contrast to the situation in Indonesia, the work of a translator in socialist countries at that time was a lucrative form of employment.

45 Koesalah was introduced to Novosti by German Belousov, a fellow journalist at the bureau who spoke excellent Indonesian and who had been a guide for the Indonesian delegation to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957.

Koesalah's skills in Indonesian and Russian were also sought after by a state publisher in Moscow (*Izdatelstvo literatury na inostrannikh yazikah*) that produced publications specifically for export. This invitation enabled him to pursue his interest in literary translation. He first translated a work by Jingis Aitmatov entitled *Materinskoye pole* (*Ladang Keibuan*, (Maternal farmlands), in Koesalah's Indonesian translation), and then a collection of Lenin's letters, *Pisma Amerikanskim rabochim* (*Surat-surat kepada kaum buruh Amerika*) (Letters to American workers). Lenin's works were required reading for students in the Soviet Union at the time, so it is not surprising that this collection of letters was selected for translation into Indonesian. Documentation concerning its intended publication in Indonesia is unavailable, but Koesalah assumes that the translation was sent to Jajasan Pembaruan. He was paid for his work as translator, but neither of these volumes ever appeared in print, thwarted by the events of 30 September-1 October 1965.[46]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

After the emergence of the Republic of Indonesia as an independent nation, there was a dramatic decline in state involvement in publishing. At the same time, there was an enthusiasm among creative writers and artists for the exploration of ideas and the examination of visions for the future which the new political freedoms had opened up. Many creative writers responded to the spirit of the times by embarking on literary translations on their own initiative, and becoming part of international creative networks. Local networks formed through the large number of new magazines and newspapers that appeared after independence to give voice to particular currents of cultural and political thought. In many cases, writers and artists were represented on the editorial boards of these publications, supplementing their income from writing through involvement in the world of publishing in general. Increasingly, they became subject to the influence of the conflict taking place between the Cold War superpowers, dividing on ideological lines into mutually antagonistic groupings. This ideological division also influenced the selection of literature for translation into Indonesian, as has been illustrated above through the examples of Trisno Sumardjo and Koesalah Soebagyo Toer. Trisno Sumardjo, commit-

46 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer himself fell victim to these events. He was detained for ten years without trial from 1968-1978 at Salemba prison.

ted to the ideals of cultural freedom, chose literary works from all over the world for translation, driven by a desire to discover the essence of a universal humanity. Koesalah Soebagyo Toer chose to translate the works of writers who were engaged in the struggle to defend the oppressed, which he conceived exclusively in socialist terms. The literary translations which these two men undertook illustrate the extent to which Cold War politics permeated the world of Indonesian literature in the decade after 1955.

No attention has been paid here to the activities of translators who provided a link between Indonesia and the United States at this time. In the second half of the 1960s these links were apparent in the number of translations of the work of American writers into Indonesian, sponsored both by the American government and American organizations in Indonesia. For example, during this period a number of works by Harold Lamb were translated by Asrul Sani, Toto Sudarto Bachtiar, M.D. Aliff, Sumantri Mertodipuro and Hazil and published by Pembangunan in cooperation with the Jajasan Penerbitan Franklin, Jakarta–New York.[47] The basis of that translation venture, and the extent to which American institutes and organizations may have been involved in supporting translations of American literature in the pre-1965 period, remains unclear.

Neither has any attention been given here to the processes which led to the translation of works by Indonesian Muslim writers, such as M. Dimyati and Muhammad Radjab, into Russian at this time. The question of who selected these works for translation and how they were made known in Russia remain intriguing topics for further research.

It is my hope that questions such as these will be explored in future research on the subject of literary translation in Indonesia. Much remains to be done, if we are to understand the extent to which the translation of literary works into Indonesian contributed to the transmission of ideas into Indonesia and the growth of Indonesia's own literary tradition in the 1950-1965 period. This study has attempted to lay the groundwork for that research, by exploring some aspects of the context in which literary translation took place at that time.

Translated from Indonesian by Keith Foulcher

47 I thank Hairus Salim for this information.

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8

Performing Indonesia abroad[1]

Jennifer Lindsay

In 1954, Sutanti was a young woman of twenty five.[2] Her education had spanned three eras. She attended primary school during the Dutch colonial period, and when she was twelve had started studying Javanese classical dance at Kridha Beksa Wirama, the dance school established in 1918 by princes from the Yogyakarta palace.[3] Sutanti attended junior high school in Yogyakarta during the Japanese occupation, was sixteen in 1945 when Indonesia declared its independence, and completed her schooling during the turbulent 1945-1949 revolutionary period. In the 1950s, she became a member of the newly established dance association Perkumpulan Kesenian Irama Tjitra where she studied classical and contemporary adaptations of Javanese dance.[4]

In early 1954, Sutanti began working at the national government's subdirectorate for the arts (Kantor Djawatan Kebudajaan

1 In 2010 I directed a 90 minute video documentary, titled 'Menggelar Indonesia; Misi kesenian ke manca negara 1952-1965' ('Presenting Indonesia: Cultural missions abroad 1952-1965') made up of extracts from interviews with 30 participants of the cultural missions of the 1950-1965 period, and illustrated with photographs from the interviewees' personal collections. Copies of the documentary have been deposited in libraries of major centres of Indonesian/Southeast Asian studies. Readers are encouraged to refer to the documentary.

2 There is some discrepancy on the date of Ibu Sutanti's birth. Her employment records noted 1929, whereas her parents thought she was born in 1927.

3 Kridha Beksa Wirama was founded by P.A. Tejokusumo, P.A. Suryodiningrat, P.A. Joyokusumo, P.A. Hadiwinoto, P.A. Suryowijoyo, R.W. Suryomurcito, R.W. Puspodirjo, R.W. Atmodijoyo, R.T. Puspodiningrat, R.T. Wiroguno, R.M. Joyodipuro, RP. Joyopragolo, R.W. Sastrosuprapto and P.A. Hadikusumo. From 1945-1948 its activities stopped. The school reopened in March 1948 with new organization (Soedarsono 1976:89).

4 The Irama Tjitra Association, or Perkumpulan Kesenian Irama Tjitra was established in December 1949, with Ismandji Kartakusuma as its head, and had open membership. Dance, gamelan and singing (*tembang*) were taught. It differed from the existing school Kridha Beksa Wirama in that it taught both palace and non-palace styles, experimented by taking 'folk' legends and even non-Javanese stories as basis for performance, and took as its guiding principle the aim to develop 'national culture' (*kebudayaan nasional*) (Soedarsono 1976:97). The association was run by young dancers the majority of whom had studied at Kridha Beksa Wirama. Wisnoe Wardhana was one of its members.

Yogyakarta group from Indonesian Cultural Mission before departure for the People's Republic of China in 1954. Crouching at front Kuswardji Kawendrasusanto (left) and Bagong Kussudiardja (right). Standing left to right Wisnoe Wardhana, Karjono, Basuki Kusuworogo, Sutanti, Imam Nur Suwidah, Sutambo Djokobroto, Noek Siti Soenarti, F.B. Suharto. (collection of Bagong Kussudiardjo family)

Urusan Kesenian), which was then located in Yogyakarta. The office of the Directorate of Culture (Djawatan Kebudajaan) within the Department of Education, Training and Culture (P. P. & K., Pendidikan, Pengamatan dan Kebudajaan) had already moved to Jakarta. Shortly after beginning work at the subdirectorate for the arts, Sutanti was selected by her workplace to participate in Indonesia's first high-level official cultural mission abroad, a tour to the People's Republic of China (PRC).[5]

Sutanti was one of around eleven dancers from Yogyakarta chosen from various dance associations. The Yogyakarta group included both classically trained dancers and those beginning to

5 In the early 1950s, the term 'cultural mission' was also used for delegations of officials sent on familiarization tours (for example a 'Missi Kebudajaan' to Thailand in 1953 led by Ki Mangoensarkoro as mentioned in the editorial of the journal *Budaya* 3-1 (January 1954):1). The term 'Missi (later 'Misi') Kesenian' (and occasionally 'Muhibah Kesenian' or 'Misi Persahabatan') became common for groups of artists rather than officials. The term most commonly used for groups of performers sent abroad was 'misi kesenian'.

experiment with modern adaptations, particularly Bagong Kussudiardjo and Wisnoe Wardhana.[6] The Yogyakarta contingent – led by Sutanti's superior Suharmanto, the head of the dance section of the office where she worked and himself a dancer from the Mangkunegaran in Solo – left by train for Jakarta for a period of training before departure. This was only the second time in her life that Sutanti had been to Jakarta. Her first trip had been as a dancer in a *wayang wong* performance as part of a student group from the Mantrijeron area of Yogyakarta, which was a branch of the Indonesian Association of Students (IPI, Ikatan Pelajar Indonesia).[7]

In Jakarta, the training sessions were held at Jalan Pegangsaan Timur 56, the Gedung Proklamasi and former home of President Soekarno. There she met the other tour participants, who were from Solo, Bandung, Makassar, Medan, Padang and Jakarta. This was the first time in her life that she saw dance and heard music from other parts of Indonesia, other than from Solo. At the training sessions, she observed the performances from other regions and worked with her Yogyakarta colleagues on her own dance repertoire, which consisted of short duos. The artists watched each other, and got to know each other. Together with the other performers, she learnt national songs, songs from other regions, and even some other dance movements such as the Malay social dance, *serampang duabelas*, which she went on to study more intensively after the tour to China.

The entire group including officials numbered 60, made up of 25 women and 35 men. Sutanti remembers there were eleven performers from Yogyakarta, eight from Solo, nine from Sunda (West Java), and the rest were from Medan, Padang and Sulawesi. But the group also included an official photographer, and visual artist Henk Ngantung who was in charge of an accompanying exhibition of visual art. The overall leader of the mission was Mangatas Nasution, from the central office of P. P. & K., Jakarta. Bachtiar Effendy was in charge of the performance section.[8]

6 Bagong Kussudiardjo (also spelt Kussudiardja) and Wisnoe Wardhana later both went on to establish their own dance schools in 1958 after they returned from Rockefeller Foundation funded study in the United States from mid-1957-1958. Bagong established his Pusat Latihan Tari Bagong Kussudiardja on 5 March 1958, (Bagong Kussudiardja 1993:175). Wisnoe Wardhana set up his Contemporary Dance School Wisnoewardhana (CDSW) in the same month, as mentioned in 'Sekolah tari modern jang pertama di Jogjakarta' in the cultural section 'Berita Kebudajaan' of *Budaya* 7-6 (June 1958):251.

7 I have been unable to trace the organization with this exact name, but Sutanti says it was not IPPI (Ikatan Pemuda Peladjar Indonesia, which was linked to the Communist Party, PKI).

8 Bachtiar Effendy also joined the mission to East Pakistan the following December representing Perusahaan Film Negara (PFN, State Film Corporation). Presumably he acted in the same capacity on this first mission. Bagong Kussudiardjo's account (1955:24) of this tour mentions that Bachtiar Effendy's wife performed a Balinese dance with tape accompaniment in Beijing.

The group left Jakarta by ship (the Tjiwangi) on 21 July 1954 for Hong Kong. This was Sutanti's first trip abroad, as it was for the other participants, and she held an Indonesian passport for the first time. In Hong Kong, the group was met by Indonesian Consulate officials. She remembers vividly the border crossing from Hong Kong into the PRC, sensing the mutual suspicion of the guards on either side, and the warm greeting the group was given on entering the PRC.[9] The journey by train to Beijing took five days and nights. There were floods at the time, and the train travelled slowly, often crawling through the water. By the time they arrived in Beijing, they were all tired and desperate for a good meal. She recalls that they arrived around two in the morning and were met at the railway station by the Indonesian Ambassador, taken to the hotel, given time to change, and then were immediately taken out to eat.[10] The group performed in Beijing for Indonesia's Independence Day celebrations, and the Embassy arranged an official reception for them at a hotel, and a reception to meet Embassy staff at the home of the cultural attaché, Willem Tampi, who was from Sulawesi.[11] For the next two months the group travelled by train around China, performing in huge venues at major cities. The reception was always enthusiastic. There were huge crowds, and Sutanti remembers how the Indonesian performers were amazed that audiences clapped for so long. The group had to perform many encores, and Sutanti recalls once having to go back on stage for five curtain calls after her own duet (with male dancer Kuswadji).

Sutanti remembers that when the group arrived in Beijing in mid-August, the stadium used for the October 1 National Day celebrations was not yet finished. The hotel where they were staying was near the stadium, and they watched builders and labourers working round-the-clock shifts. When the group returned to Beijing two months later, they were astounded to see the brand new building complete. The group was part of Indonesia's official delegation at the October 1 celebrations and parade marking the fifth anniversary of the founding of the PRC. Sutanti felt immensely proud to be representing her nation. At one official dinner, she remembers sit-

9 Bagong Kussudiardjo (1955:2, 12) also commented on the impact of crossing the border on entry and exit to the PRC. Hong Liu (1995:305), writing about Indonesian perceptions of China at this time, notes how Indonesian intellectuals and artists experienced a 'border crossing syndrome' as they travelled from the British Colony of Hong Kong into the exciting, progressive PRC.

10 The group left Hong Kong on 3 August and arrived in Beijing on 7 August late at night. See Bagong Kussudiardjo 1955:3.

11 Willem Tampi is mentioned in Nalenan's biography of Arnold Mononutu (Ruben Nalenan 1981:219).

ting between a representative from Japan on one side and Holland on the other. She revelled in the irony of sitting as an equal now between two previous 'masters', and she could speak both their languages.

While in Beijing, the group visited the dance academy. Sutanti was most impressed with the academy, and particularly with the fact that the students learned so many different styles of dance. They also exchanged classes, teaching some Indonesian dance and songs, and learning Chinese dance. When she returned to Yogyakarta, the Department of Education, Training and Culture organized a meeting to discuss setting up a national dance academy in Yogyakarta. Sutanti spoke at this meeting, and of her favourable impressions of the dance academy in Beijing.[12]

The group returned to Jakarta by ship and arrived on 21 October. They had been away for three months. [13]

Sutanti's memories of the tour to China in 1954, as she related them in mid-2008, were still fresh in her mind at the age of eighty and reveal many aspects of Indonesia's official cultural missions of the Soekarno period. Like others who took part in these tours, she remembers the excitement of meeting and forging friendships with fellow artists from all over Indonesia, of learning and sharing with them new dances and songs, of travelling together to new places, of witnessing the speed of progress of another new nation, of feeling part of the potential for similar progress in Indonesia, of being appreciated as an artist and treated with respect, and the deep pride she felt at representing her country. In short, the excitement of being young, of being part of something new, and of having meaning in the larger world. Like the nation of Indonesia itself.

Indonesia's cultural missions of the Soekarno era were an expression of this national confidence and pride. Even before this first cultural mission, in 1952 the government of the young nation had sent a group of artists from Bali and Java to Ceylon, to represent Indonesia at the Colombo Exhibition.[14] The group also performed in Singapore on its way home. The difference between this delegation and the 1954 cultural mission to China was that the Indonesian artists performed at the Colombo Exhibition as one country among many. The official cultural missions that were sent and sponsored by the Indonesian government, of which the 1954

12 Bagong Kussudiardjo (1955) was also deeply impressed by the arts academies for dance, music and visual art in Beijing.

13 *Harian Rakjat*, 21-10-1954.

14 I am grateful to I Nyoman Darma Putra for drawing my attention to this tour, and to Ibu Jero Puspawati (formerly Ni Made Rupawati) for sharing her memories of this tour with me.

mission to China was called the first, were designed as tours to promote Indonesia with Indonesia the sole performer.

There were various levels of cultural missions, depending on (as far as information can now be gathered) whether the tour was fully an initiative of the Indonesian government, or responding to an official invitation at government level (compared to an invitation from a fair or festival, for instance); the level of diplomatic representation accompanying the tour (whether there was a Minister as tour leader); whether the tour was a student mission; and whether the tour had a commercial element, for instance the selling of tickets or any level of commercial sponsorship.

The highest level of cultural mission was called a Presidential Mission, a term that was used from 1957. These were missions sent by Indonesia, funded by Indonesia, and led by a Minister (namely Minister Prijono, from 1957 Minister of Education and Culture).[15] The artists were sent as representatives of the president, and received at the highest diplomatic level. It is difficult now to ascertain the precise financial arrangements for these tours, but it appears that the Indonesian government footed the bill for at least all preparation, travel and performance costs, as well as food, dress and generous daily allowance for the artists. The less prestigious tours were those with some commercial input, less financial support from the Indonesian government, or where Indonesian artists appeared alongside performers from other nations.

After the first official cultural mission abroad to the People's Republic of China in 1954, Indonesia continued to send cultural missions abroad, with increased frequency after 1957, and with dizzying regularity in the early 1960s. Over the next decade until 1965 there were at least another ten high-level official missions, which involved large groups of performers often touring for long periods of time. Their destinations included Pakistan, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Poland, Hungary, North Korea, North Vietnam, the United States, Singapore, Cambodia, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, France, the Netherlands, Egypt and Tanzania.

Furthermore, these official cultural missions were only one aspect of Indonesia's cultural promotion abroad involving performing artists at this time. Apart from the presidential-level missions and other less prestigious official cultural missions, there were also at least four other kinds of tours by Indonesian per-

15 Prijono's title was initially Menteri Muda Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Junior Minister) but he became full Minister of Education and Culture in 1962 with the title Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan until the Cabinet overhaul in early 1966 when General Suharto formally assumed power.

formers representing their country: cultural missions that were not curated by Indonesian government authorities but were given government assistance and official sanction (for instance a 1960 tour to Malaya of popular radio stars);[16] performers who toured as part of other larger events, particularly the biennial socialist World Youth Festivals organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth; LEKRA-sponsored cultural delegations; and tours of Indonesians who were based overseas, particularly students and Embassy staff (one striking aspect of the time is that Indonesian students abroad were all expected to be able to sing and dance and thus represent their country in cultural performances). The volume of traffic is striking. Indonesian performers were everywhere.

UNEARTHING STORIES

One essay cannot do justice to the breadth of this activity, and of course all this movement of performing artists was only one part of the even broader traffic that included delegations of writers and visual artists. I will focus on the official government-sponsored cultural missions of performing artists, which, like other performance activity of the 1950s and early 1960s, have attracted virtually no attention to date, perhaps because unlike literature or visual art, live performance left fewer traces. My writing focuses on the sending side of the equation – the Indonesian promotion of itself abroad, at an official level. It does not intend to focus on the reception of the tours, which would be the topic of another essay. My restriction of the following discussion to the government promoted tours of performing artists abroad was initially determined by the fact that my research into the broader picture of cultural activity abroad in the Soekarno period unearthed such a wealth of activity, far too much for one essay. However, focussing on the official government cultural missions of this period has the advantage of allowing for a particular picture to emerge – namely the way the Indonesian government saw and fashioned an official image of the nation to portray abroad at this early period of the nation's history,

16 A 'Misi Muhibah Kebudajaan Indonesia' toured Malaya in December at the invitation of the Malayan government. The tour was planned by Radio Malaya with the assistance of the Information Section of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The group of 65 Indonesian artists included popular singers Bing Slamet, Titik Puspa, Effendi, and Tuty Daulay. See the Indonesian Embassy Kuala Lumpur's newsletter, *Berita Indonesia* 21 (1960):10-12; 2 (1961):5-7, 11, 19; 4 and 5 (1961):10-2.

and a time of heightened international cultural diplomacy within the context of the Cold War.

In 2008, I had the opportunity to interview some of the artists who went on these tours. I had known many of them personally for many years and yet we had never before discussed in any detail their activities during the Soekarno period.[17] During the intensely communist-phobic Soeharto regime this had been a sensitive topic, when even participation in official presidential cultural missions to the socialist bloc could be reason enough for suspicion of leftist sympathies. When these performers generously shared their memories with me, I was struck by the interaction between these tours and the sense of being Indonesian in the 1950s and early 1960s, both as something the artists experienced and in the image of Indonesia that they staged abroad. Irawati Durban Ardjo, who was a participant in many official cultural missions from 1957, discusses the impact of these tours on the artists themselves in shaping them and their artistic practice in Indonesia in her essay in this book. My essay discusses the context and content of the official international touring, namely the events and political and artistic calendars that hosted it, and the performance programs designed for it.

In thinking about how these specific questions relate to larger ones, I have found Nicolai Volland's writing (2008) on the People's Republic of China's cultural exchange with the socialist world over the same period helpful. Volland's discussion of the PRC's cultural diplomacy as a means to foster an identity with both national and international components, and the tensions intrinsic to this process, has resonance with Indonesia at this same period. Although Indonesia was not a communist nation forging its international cultural identity solely within the socialist bloc, as China was, it too was a young nation, concerned with developing a national cultural image of itself, and culturally was linking internationally to both the socialist and the non-socialist worlds. We can also see Indonesia's cultural missions not as touristic displays of something already known and fixed, but rather as a part of the actual process of forging and expressing an identity that was simultaneously national and international.

17 I thank Bp. Kris Sukardi, Ibu Sutanti and the late Bp. Sudarmo Sostrowidagda; also Irawati Durban Ardjo, Bulantrisna Djelantik, Rahayu Supanggah, Sardono Kusumo, Theresia Suharti, Menul Robi Sularto, Runi Palar and Edi Sedyawati. Thanks too to Butet Kartaredjasa and the family of the late Bagong Kussudiardjo; Bambang Tri Atmaja, son of the late Pak Ngaliman; and Bambang Pudjaswara, son of Ibu Sutanti and the late Pak Sudharso Pringgobroto. For information on LEKRA delegations I thank Hersri Setiawan and the late Oey Hai Djoen; and on the World Youth Festivals, particularly the participation of the Gembira Ensemble, I thank Koesalah Toer and R. Badhry Djani.

NEW MISSIONS FOR NEW PURPOSES

The 1954 tour to the People's Republic of China was Indonesia's first official cultural mission. Prior to independence, arts of the Netherlands East Indies had been regularly presented beside the cultural trophies of other colonial powers at the large World Fairs, where static displays of arts and crafts together with live performances conveyed an image of timeless tradition and innocence juxtaposed to the technological development and forward-moving modernity of the West (Mrázek 2002; Bloembergen 2006). After independence, a large group of Balinese dancers and musicians went to the United States and Europe in 1952 on a tour instigated, negotiated and curated by the Englishman John Coast who had worked for the republican government. The tour was later adopted (or as Cohen tells it, co-opted) by Indonesian cultural authorities anxious about the way Indonesia was represented abroad.[18] The 1954 Cultural Mission, however, was fundamentally different, for it was the first time the new nation of Indonesia curated itself, so to speak. Furthermore, unlike the Indonesian participation two years earlier at the 1952 Colombo Exhibition in Ceylon, in 1954 Indonesia toured as a solo act. From 1954, the young republic managed the cultural self image it would portray abroad and projected that image alone, often at its own initiative.

DESTINATIONS

An important aspect of this self-management was that Indonesia now chose its own destinations for cultural missions. These were wide-ranging, but the government gave highest priority to newly independent nations, socialist countries, and to allies in the anti-imperialist cause.

Between 1954 and 1959 there were (at least) four official cultural missions abroad, but the two largest, most prestigious, and longest were to socialist countries. These were the three-month 1954 mission of 60 artists to the PRC, and a three-month tour in 1957 of around 30 artists to Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Poland,

18 Cohen 2007. John Coast (2004) wrote his own account of this tour, titled *Dancing out of Bali*. The tour was attacked in the leftist press as an exploitation of Indonesian artists. See the coverage in *Harian Rakjat* 'Rubrik Kebudajaan', 6-12-1952; 'Protes terhadap John Coast', 23-10-1952; 'Lekra gugat J. Coast', 29-10-1952. I am grateful to I Nyoman Darma Putra for drawing my attention to this coverage.

Hungary, and also Egypt which was Indonesia's ally in the African Asian Movement and leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. Between 1960 and 1965, of Indonesia's five largest missions abroad, two were presidential missions to socialist countries: a three-month tour of 28 artists to the USSR, followed by a tour to PRC, North Korea and North Vietnam in 1961, (this group was expanded for the PRC and North Korea segment of the tour by another 32 artists from Indonesia); and a two-month tour in mid-1965 of 60 artists to the PRC and North Korea, which also toured Japan. Apart from the cultural missions representing Indonesia, there were also three other missions to the PRC; a group of Balinese performers in 1956, a group from Maluku in 1957, and an all-Sumatran mission in 1959, all sent at the invitation of the China-Indonesia Friendship Society.[19]

However, despite the high profile tours to socialist countries, it is notable that during the Cold War in the early 1960s, Indonesia sent cultural missions to both the USSR and the United States and to countries aligned with both camps. And while Indonesia became increasingly allied to the PRC, even denying visas to athletes from Nationalist China wishing to participate in the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) in Jakarta in September 1962, just eight months later in May 1963, Indonesia sent a student cultural delegation to Taiwan.[20]

The other two large government cultural missions between 1960 and 1965 were official components of larger events and both went to the United States. The first of these was in early 1961, when performers were part of a 'Floating Fair' that toured Honolulu, Japan, Hong Kong, Manila, and Singapore. The novel aspect of this tour was that it took place on a ship converted as an exhibition and performance space, on which the performers travelled, and where Indonesian handicraft, produce, manufacturing, and models of town planning were also on display. At the various ports of call, people visited the ship to view the exhibitions and watch the performances. The other major cultural delegation was in 1964 when a large group of more than 60 artists was sent to the United States for seven months, as Indonesia's contribution to the New York World's Fair.

19 I am grateful to I Nyoman Darma Putra for drawing my attention to the Balinese mission. It is also mentioned in the 'Berita Kebudajaan' section of *Budaya* 5-12 (December 1956):609. Information on the all-Sumatran mission was provided by two participants, Cut Mayang Murni and Dahlia Karim, (interview Jakarta 16-8-2009). The Maluku mission is mentioned in 'Rombongan kesenian Maluku ke RRT' in the 'Berita Kebudajaan' section of *Budaya* 6-6 (June 1957):446.

20 On GANEFO, see Pauker 1965.

The ship 'Tampo Mas' refitted as Indonesia's Floating Fair to carry performers and exhibitions to Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Singapore in 1961. (collection Kris Sukardi)

Indonesia's energetic cultural exporting at this time should be seen within a wider context that included the traffic of artists within the country. The government also promoted tours of artists and familiarization tours within Indonesia at this time, for instance a tour of Javanese artists to Kalimantan in 1956.[21] Cultural exporting should also be placed within the context of the flow of visits by foreign heads of state and dignitaries to Indonesia, which provided opportunities for Indonesian performers to meet each other, and another important ceremonial frame for creating performance. These performances also interacted closely with the cultural missions, as many of the artists and program items were the same.

Visits by foreign dignitaries were frequent: in 1959 alone, there were visits by the Prime Minister of Cambodia Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and North Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh, both in February and within three weeks of each other; President Rayendra Prasad of India visited in September, and President Tito of Yugoslavia in December. They all were entertained with official performances in Jakarta at the Istana Negara, and all but Tito also in Bandung.

21 See Bagong Kussudiardjo's article (1956) about this tour.

Indonesia also hosted many visits by foreign artists at this time, both at an official government level and tours hosted by LEKRA or smaller ensembles sponsored by foreign embassies and cultural organizations. Many of Indonesia's official cultural missions abroad either initiated return missions by artists from the countries they visited, or were themselves return visits after tours by overseas artists. A survey of 'cultural news' sections of cultural journals from the 1950s and early 1960s shows a constant stream of such visits by foreign missions, but all this remains the topic for another essay.

Indonesia's smaller or shorter official missions abroad were often reciprocal tours following a visit to Indonesia by foreign performers or heads of state, or to participate in international cultural events.[22] Indonesia's second official cultural mission, for instance, which also took place in 1954, was a delegation of around 30 performers to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to participate in the two-week-long International Festival of Dance and Music held in Dhaka. Kris Sukardi, a gamelan musician from Solo who went on that mission (and many others subsequently), wrote of his experience in East Pakistan, and noted that the other countries that participated in the festival were the Philippines, Thailand, Malaya and Burma (Kris Sukardi 1956). He also joined the 1959 student delegation to Singapore of 39 performers selected from various arts associations in Indonesia, which toured for two weeks in August at the invitation of the Singapore government to mark the celebration of Singapore's self-government.[23] Other destinations for tours between 1960 and 1965 included Thailand (Bangkok, December 1962-January 1963, and a student delegation in 1965), the Philippines (1963), Pakistan (March 1964) and Cambodia and Japan (May-June 1964).

Notably, none of the cultural missions abroad toured any colonial power. The group sent to the New York World's Fair in 1964 performed in Paris and the Netherlands during a stopover on their way home to Indonesia after seven months in the United States, but this was not the focus of the tour. In fact, the group was only told of this add-on to their US sojourn and the consequent delay to their return to Indonesia about one month before they left New York. Their Paris 'tour' consisted of 2 or 3 performances at the Chaillot Theatre, and coincided with a visit to Paris

22 Irawati Durban Ardjo (2008:132-49) lists performances for visiting dignatories in Bandung and the Istana for which she and other Sundanese dancers participated.

23 See further the Indonesian Embassy Kuala Lumpur's newsletter, *Berita Indonesia* 20 (1959):7-9.

by President Soekarno with his newest wife, Dewi.[24] In the Netherlands, the group performed in Rotterdam, Eindhoven, Scheveningen and Amsterdam (Nicolaï 1964). This tour, which took place just after the arrival of Indonesia's ambassador, Soedjarwo Tjondronegoro (following the normalization of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands after settlement of the West Irian issue in 1963) and at the time of bilateral talks on technical assistance and credit loans,[25] was hailed as the largest Indonesian cultural event in the Netherlands since Indonesia's independence, and the first tour of performers to take place in 25 years (Nicolaï 1964).[26] The group presented a performance before Queen Juliana at the Soestdijk Palace where Indonesian artists now performed as Indonesian nationals before the Dutch Queen, not as her colonial subjects. Unlike performances in pre-war Holland, their performance of songs and dance was representative of their nation, rather than a single palace or place within the Netherlands East Indies, and the 'new, modern look' of the performances compared to the image of 'twenty-five years ago' was commented upon in Dutch newspaper coverage.[27] The performers' cosmopolitan confidence and experience at including local songs in their repertoire meant that there was no hesitation in including a Dutch song; the program presented before the Dutch queen included an *angklung* rendition of *Daar bij die molen.*

TIMING

Cultural missions that were sent abroad at Indonesia's initiative rather than to participate at a festival, world fair or international event, were frequently timed to support other Indonesian diplomatic activity. In the 1950s, Indonesia was opening embassies abroad and appointing and giving special training to cultural atta-

24 Runi Palar, a dancer in the group, recalls that the Paris trip was hastily organized because of Soekarno's visit, which was in fact a honeymoon for Soekarno with his newest wife, Dewi. I have found no confirmation of this.

25 See 'Overleg met Indonesie', *de Volkskrant,* 24-10-1964.

26 On the bilateral talks see 'Overleg met Indonesie', *de Volkskrant,* 24-10-1964. On the arrival of Indonesia's ambassador, see 'Benoeming Ambassadeurs', *de Volkskrant,* 28-10-1964.

27 Nicolaï 1964. There was one region-specific performance in Holland. The Balinese dancers from the group performed at the Tropen Instituut in Amsterdam on 6 November. See 'Prachtige Expositie in Tropen Instituut', *de Volkskrant,* 7-11-1964.

chés.[28] Cultural missions were often part of this diplomatic statement of presence, particularly in the New World of socialist and newly independent nations. National days also provided a new calendar for timing tours between new nations. It is significant that Indonesia's first official cultural mission in 1954 was to the People's Republic of China and coincided with the year the Indonesian Embassy opened in Beijing.[29] The visiting artists arrived in time to perform there on Indonesia's independence day of 17 August, and after touring the country by train, they were back in Beijing in time to watch the parades for the PRC's celebration of five years of nationhood on 1 October.[30]

Immediately following the successful 1954 tour to China, the USSR issued an invitation to Indonesia for a cultural mission. The Indonesian Embassy in Moscow had also opened in 1954 with Soebandrio as the first ambassador, but the mission did not take place until 1957 when the tour was timed for the opening of the Indonesian Embassy in Czechoslovakia. By then, long distance air travel made such a tour feasible, and the entire tour of five countries (Czechoslovakia, USSR, Hungary, Poland and Egypt) including travel to and from Indonesia took just under three months.

The calendar of national days and embassy openings around which cultural missions were arranged, also intersected with the busy socialist cultural calendar, particularly the biennial World Festivals of Youth and Students that were organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Beginning with the first World Festival of Youth and Students held in Prague in 1947, Indonesia had a presence at every one of these festivals through to 1962, which was the last to be held during the Soekarno era. Initially, as in Prague in 1947, Indonesia was represented by students who were already abroad, but by the mid-1950s Indonesia was sending large contingents that included performing and visual artists, writers and athletes, and which were further augmented by Indonesian students resident in Europe. The northern summer tim-

28 See the editorial in *Budaya* 3-3 (March 1954):1-2, which praises the government initiative of training cultural attachés in the promotion of Indonesian culture abroad, and quotes the Minister of Education, Training and Culture's announcement that cultural attachés would be placed in Indonesian Embassies in the United States and Europe, Egypt. Pakistan, India, Thailand, and the People's Republic of China.

29 The Ambassador, Arnold Mononutu, had arrived the previous October, and presented his credentials to Mao Tse Tung on 28 October, 1953 (information kindly provided by Mr Santo Darmosumarto, Second Secretary Indonesian Embassy, Beijing, email 17-12-2008).

30 On the Indonesian group's participation in the 17 August events, see *Harian Rakjat,* 22-8-1954.

ing of this biennial event, which was usually held in early August, happily coincided with Indonesia's own national day, and visiting singers and performers could be involved in local Embassy-sponsored celebrations. In 1957, when the World Festival of Youth and Students from 28 July-11 August was held at the socialist world hub of Moscow – and was thus the largest Festival ever – the contingent from Indonesia numbered around 60, including performers from Aceh, West Sumatra and West Java, visual artists and writers (including a young Rendra), dancers from the Jakarta-based leftist student group Persatuan Peladjar Indonesia (PPI, Association of Indonesian Students) whose members were predominantly Indonesians of Chinese descent, and the leftist choral group, Gembira (about which Rhoma Yuliantri writes further in this volume).[31]

Cultural missions were timed to bolster political alliances, but they were also sent when Indonesia's political relations with the destination country might be fragile. In early 1963, when Indonesia was fostering its links with the Philippines in the short-lived Maphilindo alliance to jointly oppose the formation of Malaysia, a cultural mission toured Manila, Cebu and Davao. On the other hand, early the following year, after Indonesia had swerved decidedly left in its political allegiance and withdrawn from the US stabilization plan (with Soekarno's famous retort 'To hell with your aid!'), one of the largest and longest cultural missions was sent to the New York World's Fair. A cultural presence could be a statement of alliance or a statement of defiance.

After 1957, and particularly in the early 1960s, cultural missions became more frequent. By this time, air travel was easier and the tours could be shorter. They were also becoming routine, as many of the artists were now seasoned participants; they returned for subsequent tours and presented the same or similar programs. The era of months of long preparation prior to departure, as Sutanti experienced back in 1954, had passed. The rehearsal periods were shorter and more streamlined as experienced artists shared their skills with new recruits.[32] Yet the fact that the missions were now easier to send abroad does not in itself explain the volume of Indonesia's official cultural missions at this time, or the imaginative scale of grandiose tours like the 1960-1961 Floating Fair. That took will.

31 The cultural mission group was in the USSR from 18 September to 10 October, 1957 (Gidaspov 1959:82).

32 They could still be intensive. The training session for the 1961 tour to the USSR, PRC, North Korea and North Vietnam was held at Tugu (Puncak) for one month prior to the group's departure. See Edi Sedyawati 1961.

One influential person exercising that will was the Minister of Basic Education and Culture, Professor Prijono, who became minister in the Djuanda Cabinet in 1957 and remained in that position through six subsequent cabinets until March 1966. A Javanese from Yogyakarta, Prijono was a trained Javanese classical dancer himself, held a doctorate in literature from Leiden University, and was Dean of the Arts Faculty at the University of Indonesia from 1950 until he was appointed Minister in 1957.[33] He was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize in 1955 for activities as a member of Indonesian Committee of the World Peace Movement and was Chairman of the Indonesia-China Friendship Association from the year of its establishment in 1955 to 1957.

Prijono's chairmanship of this Association began the year after the 1954 Cultural Mission, which it seems he accompanied for at least for some of the time. On 21 October 1954, the day the mission arrived back in Jakarta, he published an article in *Harian Rakjat* on his impressions of nationalism in a socialist country (Prijono 1954). His favourable impressions of his visit were also reported elsewhere.[34] Liu (1995:122-3) notes that Prijono seemed attracted by the balanced growth of Chinese culture, namely the way the PRC maintained both Marxist cultural principles and traditional classical culture, and that he saw the rationale for this coexistence as the fact that court arts and classic literature in the PRC were appreciated as the products of 'creative Chinese artisans'.

Elegant, urbane, and polyglot, Prijono was close to Soekarno. He was a member of Murba, the proletarian party of 'national communists' and the Communist Party's rival for leadership of the left.[35] In his speeches and writing he supported socialist realism in the arts but was also a fervent cultural nationalist. He was a strong supporter of regional arts, as long as they were harnessed to national consciousness. 'National consciousness must become stronger than consciousness of any other kind, stronger than consciousness of *suku*', he stated in 1959 (Feith 1970:328-9).

As Minister, Prijono accompanied the 1963 mission to the Philippines, the 1964 mission to Cambodia and Japan, the 1965 mission to the PRC, North Korea, North Vietnam and Japan, and possibly

33 His 1938 doctoral dissertation, titled *Sri Tanjung; Een oud Javaansch verhaal,* was a philological study of an Old Javanese text.

34 'Kesan2 Prof. Dr. Prijono tentang kundjungannja ke RRT', *Merdeka* 21-10-1954 (part I) and 22-10-1954 (part II).

35 Prijono's position as Minister was immediately tenuous after the 1965 coup and he was demoted in 1966. Following the official transfer of power to Suharto on March 11 1966, Prijono was kidnapped on March 16 by activists of the Islamic students movement KAPPI and Laskar militia and taken to army headquarters.

others as well. Prijono's support and enthusiasm for Indonesia's cultural missions was probably because he saw for himself how cultural exposure abroad fostered a strong sense of national cultural identity among the participants, and also because, like Soekarno, he recognized that culture was an integral part of the vocabulary of international diplomacy of the time. While this might have been driven by 'the cultural Cold War' at least through the development of the vigorous calendar of cultural events in the socialist world that stimulated much touring activity, the fact was that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, cultural tours and exchanges were a way that nations talked to each other, eyed one another, and, through displaying what they were to various others, came to know that for themselves.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAMS

Indonesia's self-display in its cultural missions was relatively consistent from 1954 through to 1965. When Sutanti went to the PRC in 1954, the program consisted of short dances from different regions danced by duos or small groups with live musical accompaniment, some contemporary choreography using traditional movement, and Indonesian songs performed together by the whole touring ensemble. Over the following decade, the programs became more sophisticated (less simplistic, more demanding in terms of expertise) and the regions presented varied, but the missions always included both regional traditional dance, and often some modern dance as well, plus national songs and regional songs with contemporary arrangements, sung either by the whole performing ensemble, or by professional singers touring with the group. The programs portrayed Indonesian culture as part of a new, young and moving world, not (as in the colonial world fairs) in contrast to it.

REGIONS

The performers in the first mission to China in 1954 came from Central Java, West Java (Sunda), Sumatra and Sulawesi, with each regional group made up of performers from various places, associations or schools. The performers represented a region and the nation, and never any single school, palace or association. This

basically remained the pattern in all subsequent missions, (even the selection of artists for the region-specific missions sent to China at the invitation of the Indonesia-China Friendship Association, namely from Bali (1956), Maluku (1957) and Sumatra (1959) were widely inclusive, with performers chosen from all Sumatra, and from both North and South Bali rather than any single area, association, *banjar* or *pura*).[36] The Central Java group in 1954 included traditional dancers from Yogyakarta and gamelan musicians from Solo, and two Yogyakarta dancers who were just beginning to experiment with choreography, Wisnoe Wardhana and Bagong Kussudiardjo. The Sundanese group consisted of dancers and one musician, a drummer who led the Javanese musicians to accompany the Sundanese dance.[37] The Sumatra performers came from Medan and Padang, and the Sulawesi dancers and musicians, including the famous *pakarena* dancer Andi Nurhani Sapada, (about whom Barbara Hatley writes further in this book), were from Makassar. The second mission to East Pakistan in the same year involved only Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese artists. The musicians on this tour were staff and the first group of graduate students from Solo's new conservatory (Konservatori Karawitan), which had been established in 1950 and where the curriculum was Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese music.

Central and West Java remained a permanent core fixture on all subsequent cultural missions, with Sumatra the region next most consistently featured. Bali made a sporadic appearance, becoming more regularly included only in the 1960s. After 1954, Sulawesi seems to have disappeared from the missions until 1963. The inclusion of performers from Sulawesi in the first mission to China is probably linked to the fact that Indonesia's first ambassador in Beijing, Arnold Mononutu, was from Sulawesi. He had been active promoting performance from Sulawesi in Jakarta before he left for the PRC.[38] By the time of Indonesia's next large mission

36 Bp. Ida Bagus Oka Wirjana recalls that he performed abroad in 1956 with the Gong Bedulu ensemble on an all-Balinese tour of performers to Holland, Czechoslovakia and India, but I have yet to find further information about this tour.

37 This mixing attracted strong criticism from the MSDR, (Masjarakat Seniman Djakarta Raja, Djakarta Society of Artists) as reported in *Harian Rakjat,* 16-7-1954. The pre-departure performance at the Gedung Kesenian was described as 'amateur', and criticized: 'iringan musik seperti trompet dan gitaar foxtrot terhadap tari Tortor, gamelan Djawa terhadap tari2 Sunda adalah korupsi terhadap alam tari2 itu sendiri.'

38 On Mononutu, who was originally from Manado, and was Minister of Information before serving as Ambassador in China from 1953-1955, see further Nalenan 1981. Mononutu was head of the committee that brought a group of students from Sulawesi to Jakarta to perform dances and a drama titled 'Pahlawan Hasanuddin' at the Gedung Kesenian for 17 August celebrations in 1953. President Soekarno attended the performance (BMKN, *Warta Kebudajaan* 2, 3 (August/September 1953).

abroad in 1957, Sulawesi was embroiled in separatist rebellion and therefore perhaps less likely to be chosen to represent the nation. Similarly, West Sumatra, also party to separatist rebellion, was not included in the 1957 tour. Usually Sumatra was represented on the cultural missions by performers from both Padang and Medan, and occasionally also from Aceh. A relatively small mission to Australia in 1958 seems to be the only occasion Eastern Indonesia was represented, with 16 artists from Timor (performing dances from Belu, Rote, Alor and Timor) who were joined by Balinese performers.[39]

The regional part of the cultural missions' program was made up of short, varied performances, with each region allotted relatively equal stage time. The development of choreography at this time was clearly influenced by the need for new short performances with simple narrative, or traditional dances condensed and adapted with new narratives. Many dances were created or recreated to fit the 'folk dance' frame that was particularly promoted in the socialist world. Thus a 'fisherman's dance', 'weaving dance', 'rice harvest dance', 'youth courtship dance' or 'batik dance' could relate to dances of similar theme in Vietnam or China. A traditional dance, for instance one that featured Javanese movement of a choreographed fight between the ogre Cakil and the female warrior Srikandi, could be given new 'progressive' interpretation, if necessary, as the force of progress defeating old powers of feudalism or imperialism.[40]

The Javanese section of the regional program included short duets of contrasting dance styles, (for instance male with female, or refined *alus* style with boisterous *gagah*) often choreographed as fighting sequences, or an extract of *srimpi* or *bedhaya* dance choreographed for fewer dancers. The Sundanese section of the program featured new choreography such as the butterfly dance, or Sulintang, a dance composed of movement from various parts of Indonesia. Irawati Durban Ardjo has documented the Sundanese programs, and discusses ways the development of Sundanese dance and costume at this time was linked to the demand for state performances both at home and abroad (Irawati Durban Ardjo 1989, 2008, and in this volume). The Balinese section included short versions of *legong* and *janger*. The Sumatran component included

39 The only reference of this tour I have found to date is the brief mention of a forthcoming tour in the 'Berita Kebudajaan' section of *Budaya* 7-2 (February 1958):105.

40 See the comment in *Harian Rakjat*'s (2-9-1954) reporting of the 1954 program in PRC where the author mentions that a performance of a dance between Srikandi and Cakil was given a 'progressive' interpretation.

Minang, Batak and Malay dance, including a new choreography of a medley of movement from Aceh, East Sumatra, Tapanuli, West Sumatra and South Sumatra (the 'Ragam Andalas' dance), as well as the obligatory *serampang dua belas* which was endorsed by Soekarno as an Indonesian social dance and an alternative to western-style dancing. Occasionally the Sumatran set also featured *seudati* dancers from Aceh.

Other regions of Indonesia, such as North Sulawesi and Kalimantan, also appeared in the program, but a distinction must be made – one that was not necessarily made at the time – between performances featuring the regions, and performances by regional performers. Many performers lived in Jakarta, and it seems that the further the region presented was from the Java-Sunda-Bali hub, the more liberties were taken with what we now would call 'authenticity'. Kalimantan, for instance, was represented by the 'Giring Giring' dance, which was an imagined 'rice-harvest' dance choreographed by Ismet Mahakam, a member of a dance association run by singer and entertainer Yuni Amir in Jakarta which trained performers for dinner shows at the Ramayana restaurant at Hotel Indonesia.[41] Yuni himself went on many of the cultural missions and often managed the 'dances from Sumatra, Kalimantan and the Celebes' section of the program, if necessary augmenting the Jakarta-based dancers with performers brought in from Sumatra or Sulawesi. It was also common for the performers on the missions to don other costumes and take part in performances from regions not their own.

Their 'own'? Indeed, this appears not to have been a major concern. The image the cultural missions presented of Indonesia made up of various different regions was not one of mutual exclusivity. Rather, being Indonesian allowed for an embracing of other regions of Indonesia as one's own. This was the sense of liberation from one's own '*suku*' and the leap to national consciousness that Prijono described – the regions were not denied, but they now belonged to all. As mentioned earlier, performers spent the training sessions prior to departure learning dances and songs from other areas of Indonesia, and even if some of these dances and songs were contemporary imaginings, participants were made to feel part of the large and varied nation of Indonesia. The sense of the regions belonging to all was emphasized by the wearing of regional dress. In the musical section of the program when performers sang popular Indonesian songs together, and outside of

41 Information from Menul Robi Sularto (formerly Retno Siti Prihatin) who participated in many cultural missions (interview, 16-10-2008).

the actual performances when attending official events, the artists wore traditional regional costume from various regions. This was not necessarily always their 'own' dress. What was important was to convey diversity, not necessarily exclusive loyalty to the costume from one's home region.[42]

NATIONAL UNITY

National unity was demonstrably enacted in the other section of the cultural missions' performance program – Indonesian songs. The missions often included radio musicians and well-known singers such as the Western-classical style (*seriosa*) singer Eveline Tjiauw, *keroncong* singers like Sampan Ismanto and Mariyati, or the popular Batak singer and guitar player Gordon Tobing, who gave their own performances and led the ensemble in song.

This section of the program featured regional songs in regional dialects or languages, and modern Indonesian compositions called 'national songs'. The former provided an opportunity to present regions not represented in the dance section of the program, and included western musical arrangements of traditional songs and newly composed songs. Batak songs – especially Beni Siahaan's 'Sing Sing So' which was immortalized by Gordon Tobing – , songs from Eastern Indonesia such as the popular 'Ayo Mama' and 'Rasa Sayange', Irian ('Yamko Rambe Yamko') as well as Javanese *keroncong* numbers (like 'Suwe Ora Jamu') and Malay songs ('Salam Alaikum') were program staples. The national songs were recent patriotic compositions in Indonesian, such as Ismail Marzuki's 'Rayuan Pulau Kelapa' and 'Halo Halo Bandung', accompanied by guitar (particularly if Gordon Tobing was on the tour), piano, accordion (there was usually an accordionist on the tour to accompany the Malay dances from Sumatra), or by members of the ensemble playing *angklung*.

Interestingly, the majority of songs performed on the cultural missions were identical to those sung by the youth groups attending the World Festivals of Youth and Students, where choral singing was the main cultural event and medals were awarded to choirs for categories such as 'best folk song'. The choral ensemble Gembira, about whom

42 In the cultural missions, at least, there seems to be no evidence of any 'sea change' in the way that regional cultures were seen and treated post-1957, which Jones (2005:120) mentions in his dissertation on Indonesia's cultural policy.

Curtain call in Prague, 1957. Gordon Tobing stands centre with guitar. (collection Irawati Durban Ardjo)

Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri writes in her contribution to this volume, won a bronze medal in the 'folk song' section of 1957 World Youth Festival in Moscow (Koesalah S. Toer 1998:57). 'Rayuan Pulau Kelapa' sung by the entire group always featured on the cultural missions, but it was just as popular if not more so on the socialist World Youth Festival circuit. Rose Kusumabrata, the *seriosa* singer who became a prominent member of LEKRA (and later became the second wife of artist Sudjojono), won a gold medal singing this song at the first WFDY in 1947 (Mia Bustam 2006:170-1). Gordon Tobing sang it at the 1953 World Youth Festival in Bucharest, before recording it in the USSR where the song became popular (Koesalah S. Toer 1998:57). Indeed, socialist festivals and events, where singing together was intrinsic to the expression of a sense of the international community of youth, particularly fostered the development of folk songs and national songs. Group singing was their common vocabulary of performance, and 'folk songs' together with 'progressive' compositions of socialist ideology were shared between countries and languages.

The general popularity of choral singing in Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s and the boom in western arrangements of local songs, owes much to the opportunities for their performance that

the socialist world of the time provided. The supply of this material answered demand by both international and national audiences. Furthermore, this was one area where performers seem to have moved fluidly between more ideologically neutral cultural activity, such as the cultural missions, and that clearly associated with the left, including LEKRA. Gordon Tobing, for instance, who, as mentioned above, attended the World Youth Festivals and recorded in the USSR, was a frequent participant on cultural missions, including the 1964 New York World's Fair. Singer Eveline Tjiauw (a *seriosa* singer) toured China on a LEKRA-sponsored delegation in 1963, but also joined the cultural mission to China, North Korea, and Japan in 1965.[43] While the choral groups of the far left like Gembira performed ideological songs composed in praise of the Communist Party, the People's struggle, Asia Africa and socialist solidarity, there was also an extensive middle repertoire that was shared with others not of communist leaning. The image of national unity that the performance of Indonesian songs on the cultural missions was intended to convey, was at the same time a deeper performance of national identity, as a shared activity within the group itself across ethnicities and political ideologies.

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

Edi Sedyawati, who went as a dancer on the 1961 cultural mission to the USSR, PRC, North Korea and North Vietnam,[44] and who was Indonesia's Director-General for Culture from 1993 to 1999 during Soeharto's 'New Order', wrote in 2006 of the cultural missions of the Soekarno period:

> The main purpose was to strengthen ties between nations, which at that time was driven by the spirit of the emergence of the African Asian nations. The content of the Indonesian cultural missions was an assortment of regional art, as was common for Indonesian independence day at the presidential palace, and often supplemented by songs, for example *keroncong* songs sung by well known singers.

43 Eveline Tjiauw (also spelt Chauw) can be seen performing with Gembira singers on the LEKRA sponsored cultural delegation to PRC in 1963 in the photo reproduced in Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri's contribution to this volume.

44 She filed a long letter for the youth column (*Taman Remadja*) of the Jakarta magazine *Trio* while still en route to the USSR, about the training session prior to Jakarta and the journey of those who went first to the USSR before joining the rest of the group in China (Edi Sedyawati 1961).

> One thing important to note about these national art activities is that behind the scenes the artists met each other and exchanged skills and ideas. It was truly 'becoming Indonesia' through the process of getting to know one another and show respect for each other's region, even though this was on a mini scale, namely between dancers and musicians. Nonetheless, the strong impression that they took back home from this experience of friendship between ethnic groups had an impact on the wider arts community. People became more aware of differences between art styles.[45]

Edi Sedyawati's comment speaks of the important way that the national and international were interacting in these tours of performing artists, namely the sense of being Indonesian that was fostered through their exposure to each other when representing the nation in an international context. They were experiencing what it was to be part of Indonesia, and how their own regional culture fitted within it. They were young. They were proud of being chosen to represent their nation. They were curious about each other, and they were impressionable.

Their experience also fed into cultural developments in Indonesia, and to the discussion about the role of culture in the nation. Edi Sedyawati studied dance in Jakarta at the Ikatan Seni Tari Indonesia (ISTI), a school that was headed by Sampoerno, a Javanese who later in the New Order worked for the Ministry of Education and Culture.[46] Various forms of dance were taught at ISTI, and Edi Sedyawati was one of many of its students invited to join cultural missions. Other performers were chosen from similar groups and associations, or had associations and training centres of their own, like Bagong Kussudiardjo, who founded his dance school in Yogyakarta in 1958. Four Balinese artists (Wayan

45 'Tujuan utama adalah guna mengeratkan kerjasama antarnegara, dan ketika itu didjiwai oleh semangat kebangkitan negara-negara Asia-Afrika. Isi dari misi-misi kesenian Indonesia itu adalah aneka kesenian daerah seperti halnya pada acara Tujuh belas Agustusan di Istana Presiden, dan sering disertai pula dengan nyanyian-nyanyian jenis kroncong oleh penyanyi-penyanyi terkemuka.

Yang patut dicatat dari kegiatan-kegiatan seni kenegaraan itu adalah bahwa di belakang pentas, para seniman bersilaturahmi dan bertukar ilmu. 'Menjadi Indonesia' melalui proses saling kenal dan saling menghargai antar suku bangsa benar-benar terbentuk walau dalam skala mini, yaitu hanya di antara para seniman tari dan musik. Namun, gema yang dibawa pulang dari persahabatan antar suku bangsa itu cukup terasa pengaruhnya di kalangan seni yang lebih luas. Perbedaan gaya seni semakin disadari.' Edi Sedyawati 2006:167-8.

46 Colonel Sampoerno SH was Direktur Kesenian in the late 1970s. He was also Kepala Rumah Tangga (head of household) for the presidential palaces, General Manager of Taman Mini Indonesia, and created a performance group Rombongan Kesenian Pelangi Nusantara.

Likes, Ni Nyoman Artha, Wayan Badon and Wayan Mudana) taught Balinese dance at the Dance Academy in Beijing for a year from 1956-1957.[47] These performers all brought their experience abroad back into these schools, centres and associations in Indonesia, which then developed repertoire appropriate for future tours and national events. This is an important and little recognized aspect of the development of performing arts in Indonesia at this time, which Irawati Durban Ardjo discusses further in this book.

Their experience abroad led many of the performers to take a fresh look at what was happening in the arts in their own country. They began to articulate concerns about finding a role for traditional art, whether this was linking it to Indonesia's revolutionary present or injecting it with national consciousness, or both. One could mean the other, but not necessarily so.

The first cultural mission to China in 1954, for instance, was clearly a deeply stimulating experience for many of its participants, most of whom were travelling abroad for the first time, and some of whom were already moving into leadership positions in the cultural world in Indonesia. Henk Ngantung, the artist in charge of the visual art exhibition, and who became a member of LEKRA's Secretariat and was later deputy governor and then governor of Jakarta (1960-1964 and 1964-1965), wrote in *Harian Rakjat* on his return about how impressed he was to see that the arts in China were 'educating the people' (Henk Ngantung 1954). Prijono, who was then already Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Indonesia, and who the very next year became head of the Indonesia-China Friendship Association, also wrote about his favourable impression of the socialist form of nationalism, and the PRC's balancing of Marxist cultural principles with Chinese traditional culture (Prijono 1954).[48] Younger artists also spoke or wrote about their experience of this tour. As mentioned earlier, Sutanti, on her return from China, spoke of the Chinese dance academy as a model for the proposed national dance school to be opened in Yogyakarta. Both Bagong Kussudiardjo and Wisnoe Wardhana wrote articles about their impressions of the PRC, noting how impressed they were at the high status and salaries of artists, the attention given to preserving and protecting traditional

47 See the 'Berita Kebudajaan' section of *Budaya* 7-7 (July 1958):296.

48 His impressions were also reported elsewhere, see *Merdeka,* 21-10-1954 and 22-10-1954. Other members of the Friendship Association (Lembaga Persahabatan Indonesia-RRT) were Prof Dr Tjan Tju Som, Ir. Taher Tajib, Henk Ngantung and Mangatas Nasution, see the 'Berita Kebudajaan' section of *Budaya* 4-2 (February 1955):116.

arts, and the fact that artists who studied at the academies were paid by the state to perform in factories, towns and villages all over China, and had future employment guaranteed as teachers. They were clearly intrigued by what they saw as the easy coexistence of regional traditional cultures and more contemporary expression, and that regional expression could indeed be national, which were both issues of concern at home as the new republic dealt with its colonial past and regional cultural identities (Bagong Kussudiardjo 1955; Wisnoe Wardhana 1955).

Exposure abroad on the cultural missions, in both the socialist and non-socialist worlds, gave artists a common experience that provided them with a way to talk to each other about arts and the nation, and a comparative experience that stimulated them to think about the arts in Indonesia in national terms. It also gave models for developments at home, both as to what might be emulated, and what should be avoided, and in this artists became increasingly divided.

CONCLUSION

Writing of the PRC's programs of cultural exchange in the 1950s, Volland raises the core question: What is the nature of the relationship between nationalism and internationalism? He considers this question specifically in terms of the Sino-Soviet relationship, and the inherent tension between the centrifugal impulse of the international cultural relations of socialism, and the centripetal impulse of China's need to construct among its citizens a sense of national distinctiveness that resisted socialist internationalism. Volland's core question, however, about the relationship between nationalism and internationalism, is also pertinent to Indonesia's cultural activity in the 1950s and early 1960s. Indonesia also linked into the internationalist socialist world, although certainly not exclusively so. The cultural frame of the socialist world offered a touring circuit and a framework for cultural activity that stimulated Indonesia's cultural promotion also beyond that world. Links with the socialist world gave Indonesia's cultural internationalism a shot in the arm.

But at the same time, Indonesia was a new nation that had recently emerged from revolution against a colonial past. Artists were trying to find new meaning in their own country for arts that were associated with the pre-revolutionary, pre-national past. Tours

abroad encouraged their questioning of what was happening in the arts at home. For some, this could lead to a sense that, in comparison to the PRC for instance, Indonesia was not moving quickly enough away from its past to find a new role for artists and new styles of national expression.[49] For others, experiences in China or North Korea might sharpen their resolve that this was not the direction they wanted Indonesia's culture to follow. But whether they were impressed or not by such models, for artists who went on the cultural missions, this experience was part of the forging of a sense of being 'Indonesian' and proudly performing that to the world. And part of that sense of being Indonesian was precisely the tension that cultural internationalism fostered, the tension between the image they were presenting abroad, and the ongoing questioning about what a culture that represented their national consciousness should be.

The cultural missions of the Soekarno era took place as the new republic was establishing itself at home and abroad, at a time of intense questioning about the nation and culture. This was also the Cold War era, and the cultural missions were stimulated by the internationalism of that context. The question that arises is a hypothetical one, but nonetheless fundamental to this research into Indonesian cultural history of 1950-1965, namely, whether there would have been such an emphasis in Indonesia on internationalism had the Cold War not existed. And without that emphasis, how would the formation of national culture have played out in the 1950s and early 1960s?

Indonesia's cultural missions of the 1950s and early 1960s exude a sense of enormous cultural confidence. The vision was often bold, the tours extensive, the artists young, energetic and curious. After 1966, with Indonesia now firmly aligned to the United States, there were no more official tours to socialist countries. The shape of tours changed, with artists sourced from fewer places, and the image presented less nationally representative. State-sponsored missions dwindled. And within Indonesia, one part of the discussion about national culture, namely the debate about the political role of art in the nation, a debate that had by then become bitterly politicized, was silenced.

49 Hong Liu's 1995 dissertation and his more recent article in *Critical Asian Studies* (2006) are excellent discussions of the image of PRC held by Indonesian intellectuals (including writers and artists) from 1949-1965.

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PART 2

Culture and the nation

9

'Whither Indonesian culture?' Rethinking 'culture' in Indonesia in a time of decolonization

Els Bogaerts

When Claire Holt returned to Indonesia in 1969 after an absence of twelve years,[1] signs of '"cultural change," "economic development or "modernization,"[...] could be seen and felt everywhere, not least in the sphere of the arts.' The bitter debate between proponents of nationalism and of internationalism was no longer raging, she wrote. 'If it continued simmering below the surface, signs of it were not discernible' (Holt 1970:163).

Recalling her observations of the world of the Indonesian arts in the 1950s and 1960s, Holt (1970:163) wrote:

> among individuals and groups consciously concerned with the cultivation of the arts [...], love of the past, awareness of the present, and aspirations for the future produced efforts in three different directions. There were those who strove to preserve traditional art forms in their classical purity, as in music, dance and dance drama; those who tried to meet the challenges of modern times by grafting new elements upon the solid body of tradition or even modifying some of its basic principles; and those who, turning away from tradition entirely, were introducing new inventions or adapting borrowings from outside. (Sometimes all three of these directions were pursued by one individual or were the declared policy of one organization.) This, as far as I could judge, remained true in the sixties, but the lines seemed more sharply drawn.

While many of the contributions to this book explore aspects of the approaches to Indonesian art and culture Holt describes here, the following essay takes the discussion one step further back in time, to the very beginnings of Indonesian thinking about culture in an era of decolonization.

1 I would like to thank Melani Budianta, Tony Day, Keith Foulcher and Jennifer Lindsay for their critical comments on earlier versions of this essay.

A NEW CULTURE FOR A NEW NATION

As in most decolonizing countries, in Indonesia 'the nation-state was seen as the protector of culture and the opponent of cultural imperialism' (Betts 2004:46). Indonesian governments of the early 1950s promoted the development of nationalism in culture, art and science (Jones 2005:95-6), and official Cultural Congresses (Kongres Kebudajaan), first held in 1948, discussed ways of defining Indonesian culture in the new post-colonial context. As early as the 1948 Congress, this new context added a degree of urgency and a need for practical decision-making to the terms of the cultural debate that had been part of Indonesian nationalist discourse since the 1930s. Now, alongside definitions of culture and explorations of the relationship between culture and the nation, it was time to begin setting in place the cultural arm of the Indonesian state. This meant addressing questions like: What was to be done with the inherited colonial structures and institutions for culture, and what was the Republic to set up in their place? Should the Republican government include a Ministry for Culture? How would the management of cultural heritage – such as archaeological sites, urban architecture and the material culture of the regions – be handled? How would teaching and training in the field of culture be managed? Notably, these early cultural congresses also discussed the need for arts academies teaching performing and visual arts, particularly Indonesia's own performance traditions. These academies began to be established in the early 1950s, and many continue to function (as arts 'institutes') to this day.

Reflecting their conviction that thinking about culture should form part of the philosophical underpinning of the structure of the state, participants in the 1948 Cultural Congress passed a resolution calling for the establishment of an advisory body to government comprised of prominent government and non-government figures in the world of the Indonesian arts. This was the Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia (LKI, Institute of Indonesian Culture), an initiative of Armijn Pane, Sunarjo Kolopaking Sanyata Vijaya and Wongsonegoro, which was established in 1948 with Wongsonegoro as head and Abu Hanifah as his deputy.[2] It was entrusted with the publication of the cultural journal *Indonesia*, which from 1950 drew together creative artists and cultural thinkers from right across the

2 Wongsonegoro, a specialist on Javanese spiritualism (*kebatinan*), later became Deputy Prime Minister (1953-1955). Abu Hanifah, a writer of drama, politician, medical doctor and diplomat, was Minister of Education and Culture in the Republik Indonesia Serikat (RIS, Federated Republic of Indonesia), formed after the transfer of sovereignty in 1950.

political and ideological spectrum, as well as the organization of subsequent cultural congresses.[3]

Outside the official channels for the promotion of a new national culture, Indonesian intellectuals and artists gathered in *sanggar*, their preferred forums for cultural exchange. Here they discussed culture and art, and the role of art in the creation of a new Indonesian identity (Spanjaard 2003:81). Mass media also became important forums for debate, as the bases for a national culture detached from the colonial burden were explored and a variety of cultural options were held up to examination. Despite the political and economic turbulence and chaos of the first years of independence, dozens of new journals appeared, several of them lasting from the end of the 1940s until the beginning of the 1960s.[4] Written in Indonesian for an Indonesian readership, these journals offer important insights into the discourse of the time, showing the range of topics discussed and serving as a guide to the networks that existed among small elite groups in Indonesia, and between them and the rest of the world.

In this essay, I will look at the early discussions concerning culture and decolonization in *Mimbar Indonesia* (abbreviated *MI*), a general weekly magazine published in Jakarta from 1947 to 1966.[5] I use the adjective 'early' as I will concentrate on the issues of the journal that were published in 1950, showing the ways in which Indonesian intellectuals and cultural figures of the time attempted to give cultural form and content to political independence. I will restrict myself to just a few main topics and omit others that also regularly feature in the journal, such as literature, sports or the representation of foreign cultures, to name but a few.

MIMBAR INDONESIA: 'A NATIONAL ENTERPRISE'

In its first issue, published on 10 November 1947, *Mimbar Indonesia* presented itself as an independent journal for building the nation, for discussion of political, economic and social questions, and for devel-

3 In 1952, the LKI was amalgamated into a larger advisory body called Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (BMKN, Council for Deliberations on National Culture), which was active until the late Soekarno period. For more on the cultural congresses, see Foulcher 1986; Sapardi Djoko Damono 1987; Jones 2005; Nunus Supardi 2007.

4 Liesbeth Dolk (1993:179-81) and Ulrich Kratz (1988:820-33) give an overview of the journals they consulted for their research. The Ipphos Report claims that in 1950 about a hundred journals were published (with 800.000 copies per issue), while by the end of 1954, 186 different journals were published (with 1.243.000 copies per edition) (*Ipphos Report* 9-1:4).

5 I would like to thank Liesbeth Dolk for generously sharing her archive of *Mimbar Indonesia* and other Indonesian journals with me.

oping Indonesian culture.[6] As a 'national enterprise' (*usaha nasional semata-mata*) it appeared for the first time on National Heroes' Day, the date that commemorated the beginning of the national revolution in November 1945 (*Kata pengantar* 1948:3). *Perdjoangan*, or struggle, was thus an important founding principle for *Mimbar Indonesia*, standing alongside its declared liberal attitude and its cosmopolitan openness and intellectual approach. It took its duty to devote itself to the nation's ideals seriously, and claimed to be completely independent from any political party or affiliation (*Pemberitahuan* 1948:24).

From 15 January 1951 onwards, *Mimbar Indonesia* published a separate monthly cultural edition entitled *Zenith* 'as a contribution to the building of the Indonesian nation and state in the field of culture'.[7] The monthly existed only a few years. From November 1956 onwards, going into its tenth year of publication, *Mimbar Indonesia* instead devoted a special column to art and culture, entitled 'Seni dan kebudajaan'.

In its first edition, *Mimbar Indonesia*'s editors expressed the hope that in line with its name ('Indonesia Forum') the magazine would develop into a forum in which the public had the opportunity to voice opinions about Indonesia and the world in all political and social fields, especially in relation to problems of political, economic, social, and cultural reconstruction (Redaksi Mimbar Indonesia 1947). During the first years of its existence, the editors also seemed to have aimed to attract an international readership, as English synopses of certain articles were also included. Right from the start, readers from all over Indonesia and abroad were invited to participate in the discussions.[8] Critical contributions from writers living in areas distant from Jakarta were particularly welcome, as long as they did not offend specific ethnic, religious, racial or social groups (*Obor* 1948:31). In addition, readers were encouraged to take part in the national struggle and serve their country to the best of their ability (Adi Negoro 1950a:7). The editors were grateful to

6 '*Madjallah merdeka diselenggarakan untuk pembangunan, politik, ekonomi, sosial dan kebudajaan*' (Redaksi Mimbar Indonesia 1947). These words are included in an 'Introduction' (*Kata pengantar*), glued between the last page and the back flap and presented as a letter from the editors. From October 1948 onwards, the text on the front cover, 'Madjallah Merdeka', is replaced by the English words, 'Independent non-party'.

7 '[*s*]*ebagai sumbangan untuk membangun masjarakat dan Negara Indonesia dalam lapangan Kebudajaan*' (*Zenith* 1951:1).

8 On 28 February 1948 *Mimbar Indonesia* mentions that the journal was distributed in cities in Sulawesi, South Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, Sumatra, Java and the islands of the (then) province of Negara Indonesia Timur (State of East Indonesia), as well as in 'Singapore, Leiden, Den Haag, New Delhi (India), Karachi (Pakistan), Cairo (Egypt), Canberra (Australia), New York City (USA), Manila (The Philippines), London (England), Djaddah (Saudi Arabia), Zürich (Switzerland)'.

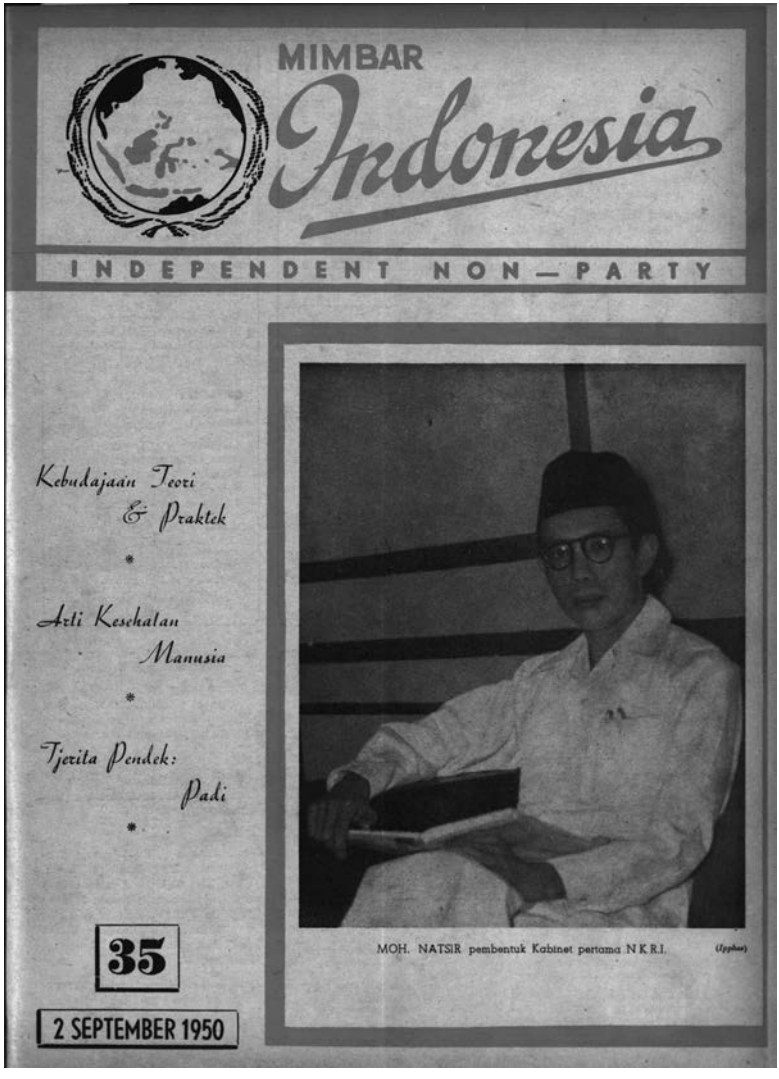


Photo front cover *Mimbar Indonesia*

those who supported the journal's mission, nearly 10,000 people, consisting of intellectuals, academics, and male and female artists of different backgrounds from all over Indonesia and abroad.[9]

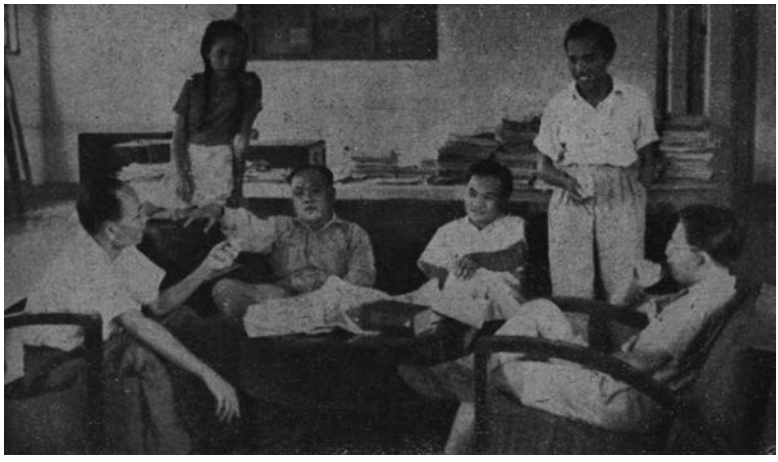
Founded in Jakarta by the Dharma Foundation as a reaction to the Dutch seizure of Balai Pustaka facilities in 1947 (*Ramon Magsaysay Award* 1989:295), and backed by prominent Indonesian intellectuals, *Mimbar Indonesia* was a fully Indonesian enterprise (Jassin 1984:30). In January 1950, the editorial board consisted of Sukardjo Wirjopranoto (chief editor), Adi Negoro, Prof Dr Supomo, and H.B. Jassin.[10] The latter, already with a reputation as a prominent literary critic, played a particularly influential role as the editor of the journal's art, culture and literature sections. Changes in the editorial board took place when Supomo became Minister of Justice and Sukardjo Wirjopranoto became the Indonesian representative in the Vatican. They were replaced by Ir. Pangeran Mohamad Noor as chief editor, and Mr Suwandi and Mr Jusuf Wibisono as members.[11]

Mohamad Noor (far left) and Sukardjo Wirjopranoto (second from left) are welcomed by Mohammad Natsir (far right) in Yogyakarta (*MI* 4-45 (10 November 1950):12)

9 '[k]aum tjerdik pandai Indonesia, para sardjana, seniman dan seniwati, ahli senilukis dsbnja, jang namanja tidak kami sebutkan dihalaman ini, karena djumlahnja dekat sepuluh ribu, berkediaman di seluruh Indonesia, dari berbagai-bagai kedudukan, dari jang tinggi sampai jang rendah dan dari segala bangsa, diluar dan didalam negara' (*Kata pengantar* 1948:3).

10 The first volume lists a slightly different editorial board, made up of Sukardjo Wirjopranoto, Andjar Asmara, Adi Negoro and Prof Dr M. Supomo (Redaksi Mimbar Indonesia 1947).

11 Adi Negoro 1950a:7. Further changes in the 1950 editorial board are mentioned in (*MI* 4-45 (10 November 1950):12).



(left to right) Adinegoro, Sukarsih, Sugardo H.B. Jassin, Darsjat Rachmad and J.A. Dungga take over editorial work of *Mimbar Indonesia* during the evacuation of Moh. Noor and Sukardjo Wirjopranoto to Yogyakarta (September 1948-February 1949). (*MI* 4-45 (10 November 1950):12)

Mimbar Indonesia's editors and contributors consisted of a heterogeneous group of individuals who moved in nationalist circles and were actively involved in the shaping of an Indonesian identity. They called themselves true republicans (which Jassin (1984:31) expressed in Dutch as '*republikein in hart en nieren*'). As they belonged to a small urban intellectual elite and often were Dutch-educated, it is not surprising that European – including Dutch – culture, politics and philosophy formed influential sources of inspiration at the initial stage of independence, as they had done for this group of Indonesians during the colonial period. These were the people who brought a cosmopolitan touch to 'Indonesianness', while at the same time explicitly declaring themselves to be anti-colonial. They expressed their opinions through their contributions to *Mimbar Indonesia* and other journals, as well as in their creative work. The groups they connected to at the time were still fluid; only later would these groups become more clearly defined along ideological and cultural political lines.[12] Most often they were multi-skilled and already experienced in a wide variety of fields and contexts. Adi Negoro (1904-1968), for example,

12 In a letter to Aoh K. Hadimadja, 22 November 1951, H.B. Jassin (1984:80) points to this openness which he calls 'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika'. Gajus Siagian gives another example of the absence of strict ideological boundaries between the journals. He mentions that in 1952 *Gelanggang* editors Rivai Apin, Siti Nuraini and Asrul Sani joined the editorial board of *Zenith* (Gajus Siagian 1952:473).

was Dutch-educated and had studied at the School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen (STOVIA, School for Training of Indigenous Physicians). He worked in the Netherlands, studied journalism in Germany and travelled extensively within Europe. Before joining *Mimbar Indonesia*, he was active as chief editor at the *Pewarta Deli* (Medan), and also worked as a cartographer. He contributed a column to *Mimbar Indonesia* entitled *Pemandangan dalam dan luar negara* (Views from home and abroad), and from March 1950 onwards he became the journal's correspondent in Western Europe.[13] Trisno Sumardjo, who Maya Liem discusses in her contribution to this volume, is another good example of an all-round intellectual and artist who contributed to *Mimbar Indonesia*. He was a painter, as well as a writer of short stories, essays, drama and poetry. He also translated Shakespeare into Indonesian (Trisno Sumardjo 1950b:22-3). The same holds for Usmar Ismail, Abu Hanifah, Asrul Sani, Rosihan Anwar and many others. Despite their different ethnic backgrounds and ideological affiliations, they shared one common goal: the building of the nation.

The contributors to *Mimbar Indonesia* expressed a multitude of opinions that sometimes differed widely from each other. They conveyed a wealth of information and expressed a multiplicity of thoughts and ideas. Yet as long as they supported the national enterprise, did not propagate a radical stance and were of excellent quality, their submissions were welcomed by the editorial board.[14] According to Gajus Siagian (1952:473) the journal did not pursue a specific political course. Teeuw (1979, I:115) also described *Mimbar Indonesia* as 'fairly independent of politics', although he claimed it was politically close to the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI) and the daily newspaper *Merdeka*.

Not only did the (written) texts of the reports, articles, essays, discussions and letters to the editor inform readers and help form their opinions on a wide range of issues affecting the nation and its culture, the visual contributions in the form of cartoons, advertisements, reproductions of paintings, drawings and etchings, and especially photographs were similarly important. Soon after the establishment of *Mimbar Indonesia*, IPPHOS, the Indonesia Press Photo Service, began to provide photographs on a regular basis.[15]

13 For more information on Adi Negoro see http://pwi.or.id/index.php/Pressedia/A-dari-Ensiklopedi-Pers-Indonesia-EPI.html, (accessed 11-8-2009).

14 In several of his letters Jassin (1984) stresses how strict his norms for selection were.

15 The Indonesian Press Photo Service (IPPHOS) Co. Ltd., the first national press agency, was established in 1946, when a group of photographers took the initiative to devote themselves to the country and the revolution, propagating the cause of an independent Indonesia (*Ipphos* 1951:149). The first issue of their journal, *Ipphos Report*, was published on 1 August 1948. Although like other journals of this period *Ipphos Report* experienced serious difficulties, it managed to keep publishing until 1963.

These photographs reveal how Indonesia presented itself internally and abroad at this time and the extent to which the press contributed to the building of the nation and its people. On behalf of *Mimbar Indonesia*, Adi Negoro (1950c:8, 22) urged the press to concentrate on visual imagery that represented progress, and those who were building the nation, rather than focusing on politicians, receptions and cocktail parties.

The journal offers a view – *Mimbar Indonesia*'s view – of intellectual and cultural history and so lends itself to analysis of the discourse on culture in Indonesia at the time. Its articles shed light on how a small group of urban Indonesian intellectuals began the task of building a culture of independence, anxiously grasping the opportunities and the challenges to build the new nation, while coming to terms with colonization and keeping the revolutionary fire burning.[16] The journal records the dynamic first steps in the shaping of a 'new' Indonesian culture, and the effort of putting the new country on the world map. At the same time, and in both the national and the international domains, it also worked to counter the continuing presence of the Dutch.

1950 – a new era?

27 December 1949, the date when the official transfer of sovereignty took place, marked the end of the struggle for political independence. By 1950 a new era was underway, a time when the pressing concern came to be what was described as 'giving content to independence' (*mengisi kemerdekaan*) (Sugardo 1950:3). For *Mimbar Indonesia*'s editors, all the new nation's energy, capital and ideas needed to be activated in order to achieve this aim (*Dari redaksi* 1950:3). In the first place *mengisi kemerdekaan* meant securing economic development and social welfare for the Indonesian people. However for those involved in culture and the arts, the slogan also resonated with the challenge to shape a national identity and the potential role that culture might play in this process.

Many parties and individuals involved themselves in the discourse on culture and nationalism in *Mimbar Indonesia*. Discussions revolved around how to define Indonesian culture, what should be considered as valuable cultural heritage for the future of Indonesia, how to combine (*mengawinkan*) this cultural heritage with modern technique and industry, and how to define the role of the people

16 See for example Sukardjo Wirjopranoto's article (1950).

in shaping this new national culture.[17] Alternative approaches and cultural models were raised and explored: was Indonesian culture to be seen as part of an 'Eastern world' and Asian culture, or as belonging to 'world culture'? Was it to be inspired by Europe (or the West for that matter), Muslim sources, or other cultures?

Artists and *budayawan* (those involved in the practice of the arts and/or the thinking about culture) were at the front line when it came to discussing the building of a national culture in the 1950s. Their involvement and concerns were, however, not new and should not be seen in isolation from previous and following events. According to Keith Foulcher (1986:13),

> when LEKRA, the 'Institute of People's Culture', was formed in August 1950, attempts to define the ways in which cultural practice might embody an ideal of Indonesian nationhood were already some twenty years old. 'Indonesian culture' had been an issue of debate and intellectual exchange since the 1930's, when nationalist-minded artists and intellectuals had engaged in a vigorous series of cultural polemics on the nature and direction of a national culture in and around the pages of the journal *Pujangga Baru*.

This *Polemik Kebudajaan* (Cultural Polemic) was preceded by the *Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Pledge) that in October 1928 proclaimed one motherland, one nation, and Indonesian as the language of unity. During the Japanese occupation, new ideas on Indonesian art and culture came to the fore,[18] and in 1950, the publication of the Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang (Gelanggang Testimonial of Beliefs)[19] again led to heated debates on the same topic, Indonesian culture.

By 1950, what was new was the context in which these ideas were being discussed. The physical and mental traces of the Japanese occupation and the revolution still lingered on, but the transfer of sovereignty to an independent nation made all the difference. Indonesians were now responsible for their own destiny, as they

17 Supomo (1948:2), for example, advocated a culture of, by and for the people for both Indonesian and Asian culture: 'Sebagai halnja dengan demokrasi pula, jang menurut kehendak zaman harus menudju kearah demokrasi rakjat, maka kebudajaan Indonesia, bahkan kebudajaan Asia dikemudian hari harus mendjadi kebudajaan dari rakjat, oleh rakjat dan untuk rakjat .'

18 Tresna (1948:17-8) and Marakarma (1950a:15, 24, 27) report on new ideas on Indonesian art and culture developed during the Japanese Occupation. See further chapter 7 of *The encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* which is entirely devoted to culture in the Japanese period (Post et al. 2010:348-402). On the influence of the Japanese period on Indonesian painting, see Raben 2009:92-3.

19 On the Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang see further Goenawan Mohamad 2002:202.

reinterpreted the past and actively responded to a present full of challenges and opportunities. 1950 was therefore a pivotal year, the beginning of a short period in Indonesian history when everything seemed possible, and the future was full of promise. Indonesia was in the process of formation, and *Mimbar Indonesia* was at the forefront of the national project.

FILLING IN INDEPENDENCE: THE QUESTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

As a journal aiming to enhance the building of a national consciousness, *Mimbar Indonesia* devoted ample attention to promoting an awareness of the manifold cultures of Indonesia. Articles on the various ethnic groups and regional cultures presented the inhabitants of the regions as Indonesians, all having their specific traditions and cultural expressions.[20] In informing readers about these cultures and traditions, the journal was promoting the need for a coexistence of regional and national cultures that was enshrined in the 1945 Constitution (Yampolsky 1995).

The discourse concerning cultural heritage in *Mimbar Indonesia* revolved around the question of 'how to combine our essential cultural heritage with the modern scientific and industrial civilization', as Supomo wrote in 1948.[21] For some, this meant maintaining values from the past, like those in ancient literature and regional languages, which they considered to be still of value in an era of independence and sovereignty (Bradjanagara 1953:6-7). An example of how cultural heritage might be preserved and yet adapted to contemporary circumstances was the establishment of the Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia in Solo, where traditional music would be taught and studied in conjunction with contemporary methods (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1950c:12-14). Trisno Sumardjo (1950c:30) provided another example: as the nation's art history forms a resource of extraordinary value, it should be preserved as a contribution to world history and culture. For this reason he proposed the establishment of a collection of paintings that recorded glorious periods in the past (*zaman2 kedjajaan sedjarah*).

Knowledge of the past, obtained by means of historiography (ilmu sedjarah) and archaeology (ilmu purbakala) was, according to Suk-

20 An example is 'Serba-serbi dari Atjeh' by Mohd. Thahir Herun (1953).

21 'Bagaimana tjaranja "mengawinkan" warisan kebudajaan dari zaman jang lampau dengan keadaban teknik dan industri modern pada zaman sekarang.' (Ways to 'marry' cultural heritage of the past with modern technology and industry) (Supomo 1948:2).

mono (1950:13-5), essential for several reasons, including the need to widen and deepen one's insight into the history of one's country so as to become conscious of one's own culture. Sukmono interpreted the meaning of history as not just confined to political history, but embracing various fields of everyday life. It saw that it encompasses all human activities, thoughts and efforts, and culture in its broadest meaning. The only restriction being that it concern the past.[22]

Often the rhetoric of the glorious character of the past and the level and value of its culture emerge in this context, and adjectives like perfect (*sempurna*) and high (*tinggi*) are used as though to convince the readers of the achievements of their own people. According to Shanty, knowledge of one's own culture was indispensable, but for different reasons from those advanced by Sukmono. Studying culture was just as useful as studying other fields of science, because the level of the intelligence and the character of a people may be measured from its culture (Shanty 1950:23). Readers of *Mimbar Indonesia* know, he claimed, that the Indonesian people are the inheritors of a high culture, as is proven by structures like the Borobudur which is part of 'our' cultural heritage. Just as the Egyptians took pride in their pyramids and sphinxes, he went on, so 'we' (*kita*) should admire the high level of the ideas and culture of our ancestors.[23]

The rhetoric of the glorious culture of the past, which rested on the work of Dutch orientalist scholarship from the colonial era, gave some Indonesian thinkers a way of establishing a continuity between the present and the precolonial past. As Betts (2004:40) observed, for some intellectuals in post-colonial societies, 'an imagined precolonial past [gave] direction to an imagined postcolonial future'. Sukmono, however, saw things differently. For him, cultural development was a continuing process of upward movement and decline, depending on political, economic and social circumstances. This meant that the weaknesses of the past offered lessons for the present that were just as valuable as past glories. In his view, a thorough historiographic knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the past would give the nation a firm basis for the future and would heighten and strengthen the Indonesian people's position in the international world (Sukmono 1950:13). Therefore, a scientific institute like the Djawatan Purbakala (the former Oudheidkundige

22 'Seperti umum mengetahui, sedjarah itu tidak terbatas kepada sedjarah politik-sadja, melainkan mempunjai ber-bagai2 tjabang jang bersangkut-paut dengan kehidupan manusia seumumnja. Dengan pendek dapat dikatakan bahwa sedjarah itu lapangannja meliputi semua kerdja manusia, semua hasil buah pikiran dan tenaga manusia, seluruh kebudajaannja dalam arti jang seluas-luasnja. Hanja pembatasannja ialah bahwa semua itu harus sudah lampau' (Sukmono 1950:14).

23 'Sungguh patut kita kagumi ketinggian pikiran dan kebudajaan leluhur kita itu!' (Shanty 1950:23).

Dienst, the Archaeological Institute) was indispensable for the study and preservation of Indonesia's heritage (Sukmono 1950:15).

The discourse on the Hindu/Indian and Islamic origins of Indonesian culture is another part of the rhetoric of the glorious past. It was defended by some and rejected by those who saw it to be the perpetuation of a colonial discourse. On scientific grounds, Sukmono (1950:13-5) fiercely defended the study of Indonesian culture in its own right, not neglecting the foreign influences, but giving priority to research into the form they took when they were adapted and incorporated into Indonesian culture. This approach made Sukmono highly critical of S. Wojowasito's recently-published history (1950) of Indonesian culture, the first chapter of which was entirely devoted to the history of Indian culture.[24]

Contributions to *Mimbar Indonesia* that dealt with cultural heritage and how it might be used in a contemporary Indonesian context may be seen as post-colonial appropriations of colonialist scholarship. Inspired by European, including Dutch, theories and approaches, they showed how the work of orientalist scholars from the colonial era might be adapted to the new conditions and the new image of the Indonesian self. As such, they can be seen as discursive adjuncts to the Indonesianizing of the research and training institutions of the colonial era and the establishment of new institutes for the study and preservation of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Both institutional reform and discursive practice played a part in the decolonizing of culture that was taking place at this time.[25]

PROGRESS AND MODERNITY

Alongside the question of how to deal with the cultural heritage of the past, the Indonesian cultural debates of the early Independence period were characterized by a concern with modernity and the question of how notions of progress (*kemadjuan*) might be detached from colonial culture. *Mimbar Indonesia*'s contributors expressed the view that culture should fulfil the needs of the time and that modernity was an issue that concerned all levels of society. The association between modernity and Western culture could be felt in the adver-

24 Sukmono 1951:22-4, 27. *India zaman purbakala* was published in 1950 in Djakarta by Badan Penerbit 'Pendidikan'.

25 This process of decolonization lasted well into the Independence period. The nineteenth-century Dutch Oudheidkundige Dienst, renamed Djawatan Purbakala in 1936, did not acquire its first Indonesian director until 1957, when Professor Sukmono succeeded the institute's former Dutch head.

tisements for fashionable clothes or products like modern English kitchenware that were carried in the journal. Some contributors expressed the idea that modernity meant being young and engaging with Western music. It meant taking up *dansa*, Western-style dancing with its associations with modernity, popular culture and foreignness, rather than remaining attached to *tari*, which was a part of the indigenous cultural heritage. Others noted that radio broadcasts of pop music and drama (*sandiwara*), movies, recorded music on discs and the performances of pop music bands, reflected the growth of a youth culture that could no longer be ignored (Kalimuda 1950:24-5). In both the articles on *dansa* and popular music, the authors discuss critically the importing of so-called Western culture. While Sju'aib Sastradiwirja (1951:22-3) lists the pros and cons of the *dansa* phenomenon, St. Kalimuda (1950:24) stresses the need to reflect on the effects of this stream of foreign influences on Indonesian music so as not to endanger the young nation.

Writers also endorsed the newfound progress of women (*kemadjuan wanita*) which was seen as a contribution to the further development of the nation (Dengah S. Ahmady 1948:11-2). The movement for women's emancipation opened up opportunities for women in areas previously dominated by men, like science, politics, health and art – all areas where the Western example provided indications of what Indonesian women might achieve if given the chance. Referring to Käthe Kollwitz and her work, for example, Rukmi pleaded for an increase of the role of women in the field of art. Female artists like Emiria Sunassa (painter), S. Rukijah (author), Ketut Reneng and Tjawan (Balinese dancers) showed what women could contribute to the Indonesian arts, and pointed to the need for an increased participation by women in these and other fields of artistic endeavour (Rukmi 1950:23-4).

Mimbar Indonesia's enthusiastic embrace of the ideals of modernity and progress reflected the journal's cosmopolitan orientation, its openness to the outside world. Foreign cultures were presented to the readership from different perspectives, such as through reviews of North American films, literary translations, articles on Negro spirituals and jazz or Indian music and films, to name but a few. In the words of Trisno Sumardjo, this openness and cosmopolitanism were essential characteristics of the 'new Indonesian person'.[26]

For Sitor Situmorang, giving the Indonesian people access to world cultures required the input of young Indonesian artists, financially supported by the government. In 'Gelanggang', he called on

26 '[p]ertama2 kita mesti orang Indonesia Baru, dan djuga kosmopolit, serta manusia jg. hati dan otaknja terbuka untuk ketumbuhan dan pembaharuan' (Trisno Sumardjo 1950b:23).

young artists to make the work of well-known authors available to the Indonesian people by translating it into Indonesian and making their ideas accessible to an Indonesian readership. His list of famous writers whose work should be translated into Indonesian included not only names belonging to the Western canon (Homer, Goethe, Shakespeare, Dante, Shelley, Hugo, Baudelaire, Schiller and Ibsen) but also representatives of Eastern cultures (albeit mainly writers known and admired in the West, like Lao Tse, Confucius, Lin Yutang, Iqbal and Omar Kayam) (Sitor Situmorang 1950b:19, 21).

The confidence with which contributors to *Mimbar Indonesia* in the early Independence period embraced the modern world and the variety of cultural options it offered to newly emerging nation states was a direct outcome of the sense of national pride born out of the hard-won recognition of independence in 1949. Freed from colonial domination, Indonesians stood ready to meet the rest of the world on equal terms, not as colonial subjects of a foreign queen but as citizens of an independent nation. Under these circumstances, Western European culture was no longer associated with colonialism, but with the modernity and progress that was the rightful aspiration of the nation state and its people. Thus, when Adi Negoro addressed *Mimbar Indonesia*'s readers in April 1950 to advise them of his departure for Europe and his forthcoming new column, *Surat dari Eropah* (Letters from Europe), his tone bore no trace of the colonial inheritance, but rather gave voice to the confidence of the new world citizen:

> In coming editions, our esteemed readers will find a series of varied contributions about my journey to and residence in Western Europe, short articles on observations of important matters which I hope will be useful, primarily for the consciousness of sovereign, independent Indonesian citizens who are aware of their self-worth as human beings with their own country and their country's position and standing in the world.[...] An independent country needs people of an independent spirit, free from all feelings of humility, free from the feeling of being colonized and a sense of inferiority. To foster that inner condition, *Mimbar Indonesia* must provide its readers with contributions of [ever] greater quality.[27]

27 'Dibelakang ini para pembatja jang budiman akan menerima ber-turut2 serba tjatatan aneka-warna dari perdjalanan saja dan kemudian dari Eropah Barat, karangan2 jang bersifat ringkas, penting, berisi berbagai pemandangan jang kiranja bermanfaat, pertama jang berfaedah untuk kesedaran warganegara Indonesia jang telah merdeka dan berdaulat, sadar akan harga dirinja sebagai manusia jang telah bernegara dan tahu tempat dan deradjat negaranja itu didunia. [...] Negara merdeka menghendaki djiwa merdeka jang bebas dari segala rasa-rendah, rasa-terdjadjah, rasa-ketjil, maka untuk mendapat kedudukan bathin jang sedemikian itu haruslah madjalah *Mimbar Indonesia* menjediakan pembatjaan jang lebih baik' (Adi Negoro 1950a:7).

In this spirit, *Mimbar Indonesia* promoted itself as the bearer of a changed consciousness, born out of independence and sovereignty and looking towards an Indonesian future as a modern nation among the world community. Relations with the Netherlands itself continued to be shadowed by the colonial experience, but *Mimbar Indonesia* reflected the sense that with the rest of the world, including Western Europe, Indonesia was now a free and equal partner.

POLEMICS ON AESTHETICS

Most contributors to *Mimbar Indonesia* regarded art as a significant contributor to Indonesia's national identity and resilience. The teacher and violinist Sutan Kalimuda (1950:24-5), for example, wrote in 1950 that a country that failed to give proper attention to art (*menganaktirikan kesenian*), would be short-lived and lacking in stability, since art is one of the building blocks of the nation, strengthening and inspiring its progress. Artists from various disciplines explored possibilities for shaping national art forms, and this led to various polemical exchanges on the nature and function of art. In the debates published in *Mimbar Indonesia* in 1950, terms and concepts were used that only much later in the decade and in the early 1960s became ideologically rigid. Nevertheless, the different schools of thought were often subject to criticism. The writer, dramatist and filmmaker Usmar Ismail, for instance, (who Hairus Salim discusses in his contribution to this volume), mockingly presented his opinion of adherents of these schools when discussing attitudes towards Indonesian art: those defending *l'art pour l'art* who pay no attention to the audience; those who give the public what it wants (but among themselves say that the public is stupid); and those in between who defend 'art for the people' (*seni untuk rakjat*). The first and second categories trample on the third one, he added quite cynically (Usmar Ismail 1950:19, 26).

Mimbar Indonesia covered debates occurring in the wider media of the time, but it was also itself a forum for polemical exchange. For instance, it reported the lengthy public discussion between two prominent figures, Trisno Sumardjo and Sudjojono, and also published their ongoing exchange.[28] In this debate, Trisno Sumardjo criticized Sudjojono, the 'father of painting in the new Indonesia'[29]

28 See also Spanjaard 2003:85-90. Marakarma (1950b, 1950c) summarized the polemic and commented critically on the exchange in 'Kesan dan harapan'.

29 '[t]okoh bersedjarah (historische figuur) selaku bapak seni lukis Indonesia Baru' (Trisno Sumardjo 1950a:21).

and leader of the Seniman Indonesia Muda (SIM, Young Artists of Indonesia), for promoting his idea that realism was the only possible painting style for Indonesia. He accepted the notion that artistic inspiration should be drawn from present circumstances in Indonesia, but rejected both Sudjojono's interpretation of realism (which, for him, was naturalism), and his assertion that realism should be 'the' definitive style for Indonesian painting.[30] In Sumardjo's view (1950a:21-3), Sudjojono's assertions were damaging the development of Indonesian art, despite the latter's claims to be making a healthy contribution to the cultural struggle.

Sudjojono (1950a, 1950b) responded in his two-part article 'Sudjojono about Sujojono'. Claiming that his work was inspired by the context in which he lived, his experiences during the guerrilla war and the sufferings of the people, he argued that modern painting should not be abstract, so one cannot be deceived.[31] He proposed the term 'real-realism' as a way of indicating a style which combines realism as a form with 'real' content, producing art which is intelligible to ordinary people.[32] He admitted that he had rejected influences from Indonesian traditions as well as from the West, placing himself in a neutral position in relation to the Indonesian world. Finally, he also rejected Trisno Sumardjo's accusation that he was a demagogue, and refused to enter into discussions on politics (in particular on the communist party, the PKI, thus warding off Trisno Sumardjo's insinuation that his views on art were the result of his political affiliations).[33]

INDONESIAN MUSIC

Music was another subject of debate about ways to shape national art to which *Mimbar Indonesia* contributed. Modern technology

30 'Bahwa keadaan tanah-air dizaman sekarang didjadikan sumber "ilham"-nja, itu kami anggap baik, sudah selajaknja dan fitri (natuurlijk). Tapi interpretasinja jang salah tentang realisme-naturalisme, serta kejakinannja bahwa "realisme"nja itulah tjorak definitif senilukis Indonesia Baru, ini tidak mejakinkan kami' (Trisno Sumardjo 1950a:22).

31 'Buat saja senilukis modern tidak lagi sesuatu barang jang abstrak, ia buat saja suatu benda jang konkrit, jang tak ada seorangpun akan bisa "menipu" saja, meskipun dia punja nama internasional' (Sudjojono 1950a:21).

32 '[...] desnoods real-realism. Isi realistis, bentuk realistis. Gambar saja buat rakjat udik bukan teka-teki' (Sudjojono 1950a:21).

33 In an anecdote related almost 50 years after these exchanges appeared in the journal, Sobron Aidit (1999) shed a different light on this discussion, saying that the polemic was artificial, as both men were in urgent need of money and *Mimbar Indonesia* was paying them for their contributions (http://www.lallement.com/sobron/serba27.htm).

facilitated the development and dissemination of ideas on Indonesian music. In its coverage of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI)'s annual 'Radio Star' (Bintang Radio) contest from 1951 onwards, *Mimbar Indonesia* showed the role played by RRI in fostering and promoting the quest for Indonesian music at this time.

Music and nationalism are a powerful combination, and many discussions in *Mimbar Indonesia* focussed on the character of *musik Indonesia*. Among the regular contributors writing on this theme were Amir Pasaribu, J.A. Dungga, Sutan Kalimuda and L. Manik. Opinions differed widely and ranged over all musical styles and genres. The issues of common concern were 'ethnicity' and 'authenticity'. Folk music or '*musik rakjat*' from the various ethnic groups received special attention. Contributors expressed a variety of opinions on how these musical traditions might be preserved and/or developed, and how they could be used in contemporary compositions (pointing to composers like Béla Bartók as exemplars). According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1950c:12-4), music categorized as classical art, such as Javanese gamelan music, had been recognized internationally for its high standing and value, and needed to be seen as another part of the national cultural heritage. However, not all participants in the discussions on music and the nation were prepared to acknowledge that gamelan was indeed 'Indonesian' music. To them, gamelan music was a Javanese cultural expression, and thus not Indonesian. Further, the music was seen as a remnant of a feudal society, from which modern Indonesians wanted to distance themselves.

Another type of music that was a source of controversy was *keroncong*. According to Nirwani (1950:22-3), *keroncong* had acquired a place in the history of Indonesian music and needed only to be brought up to date.[34] Sutan Kalimuda however disagreed. For him, *keroncong* was not 'authentic' Indonesian music, as it was performed on what he called international instruments. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that music like *keroncong*, as well as Malay music (*musik Melaju*) and jazz was becoming increasingly popular, in particular in urban environments (Kalimuda 1950:24).

In trying to define what constituted Indonesian music, contributors looked to all possible alternatives, and this sometimes led to controversy. In the view of *Mimbar Indonesia*'s editorial board, it was an issue that 'generated confusion'[35] and there-

34 '[p]aling2 hanja dapat dimodernisir sadja, karena krontjong sudah tetap dalam rupa dan bentuk, dan sudah merupakan suatu fase dalam sedjarah Seni Musik Indonesia' (Nirwani 1950:22-23).
35 'Dalam keritjuhan keadaan sekarang ini dimana anggapan mengenai kebudajaan musik kita saling selisih dan ada malah jang bertentangan [...]' (Redaksi Mimbar Indonesia 1951:6).

fore, in October 1951 the journal devoted a complete issue to music.[36] Appearing on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of the national anthem 'Indonesia Raya', the editors expressed the hope that as W.R. Supratman's composition evoked the feeling of the unity of the nation (Redaksi Mimbar Indonesia 1951:6), it might soothe the controversies. Apart from the history of the national anthem, this issue of the journal featured articles taking a variety of approaches to the question of Indonesian national music. Some contributors proposed a hybridity of musical styles as a way of making Indonesian music a part of world music.[37] L. Manik added another point of view, arguing that the concentration should not be on the 'national' qualities of Indonesian music, its authenticity and Eastern-ness (*keaslian dan ketimuran*), but rather on the composition of music of high quality. Just as Sudjojono urged painters to master the technique of painting, for L. Manik (1951:11-3, 28) the study and mastering of composition technique was of far more importance to the nation than the effort to discover the music's 'national character' (*tjorak nasional*).

Many of the issues about music discussed in *Mimbar Indonesia* in the early 1950s had arisen in the first cultural congress in 1948.[38] The concern for a distinctive Indonesian character in music, the influence of Western music including the potential threat of popular music, the place of *keroncong*, and the role of music from Indonesia's regional cultures had all emerged as topics at this congress. A decade later, they also preoccupied the Left. As Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri shows in her essay in this volume, LEKRA's music division, the Lembaga Musik Indonesia (Indonesian Music Institute), was also concerned with Indonesian musical expression. It promoted the collection of folk music and new arrangements of regional songs, along with the injection of ideologically 'progressive' lyrics into Indonesian melodies, including *keroncong*, and railed against the influence of 'decadent' western music such as rock 'n' roll. By the late 1950s, however, while the issue of 'what is Indonesian' still drove the debate, the different responses to it were becoming increasingly divergent.

36 *Nomor musik* 1951.

37 W. Lumban Tobing (1951), for instance, investigated the possibilities of synthesizing gamelan *pelog* with forms of world music. However many other ideas on hybrid forms were also advanced in this issue.

38 The 1948 congress was recorded in a special issue (Nomor Kongres) of the LKI journal *Indonesia, Madjalah Kebudajaan Indonesia* I-1-2 (June-July) 1950. B. Sitompul's contribution to the discussion on music is reported on pp. 94-9.

CULTURE HEROES

On 10 November 1950, the third anniversary of the journal's foundation and the first commemoration of National Heroes' Day in independent Indonesia, *Mimbar Indonesia* published an article by H.B. Jassin proposing the concept of 'cultural heroes' (*pahlawan kebudajaan*) as a way of honouring those artists whose creative work fostered the spirit of nationalism during the Japanese Occupation and the Revolution. In Jassin's view, artists embodied a nation's inner strengths.[39] For him, these 'cultural heroes' included the poets Chairil Anwar and Rivai Apin, and the poet, author and filmmaker Usmar Ismail, who established the theatre group Maya during the Japanese Occupation to counter the activities of the Japanese cultural centre Keimin Bunka Shidosho. Rosihan Anwar was included as a poet, creative writer and journalist whose fresh and fiery reports on the revolution in Java and whose exposure of the so-called 'Van Mook drama' in East Indonesia contributed to national independence. Sudjojono had a place on Jassin's list as the father of new Indonesian painting, and Simandjuntak as the pioneer of new Indonesian music. All these prominent artists engaged openly with the sufferings of the people, making them national heroes in the pursuit of justice, truth and honesty (Jassin 1950b:22). As all the 'cultural heroes' Jassin listed had contributed to the development of 'modern' forms of contemporary Indonesian culture, the publication of this article in *Mimbar Indonesia* was an implicit endorsement by the journal of the role modern Indonesian art had to play in the process of decolonization.

'RUSTY REMAINS OF COLONIALISM'; COUNTERING THE CONTINUATION OF THE COLONIAL PRESENCE

'Giving content' to independence above all required a decolonization of the mind.[40] When travelling from Amsterdam to The Hague

39 'Tapi seniman2 sebenarnja adalah kumpulan tenaga batin suatu bangsa. Pada mereka terkumpul dan terbentuk kekajaan (atau kemiskinan) batin bangsa, pada penjair2, pengarang2, pelukis2, pemahat2, komponis2 dan lain2 pentjipta. Dan sebagai kumpulan tenaga batin mereka mungkin merupakan pemantjar tenaga batin melalui tjiptaan2 mereka, berupa sadjak2, tjerita2, drama2, lukisan2, pahatan2, lagu2 dan sebagainja.' (Jassin 1950b:22.)

40 This concept was coined by Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in his 1986 study of the politics of language in African literature. Central to his book was the argument that 'in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europe stole art treasures from Africa to decorate their houses and museums; in the twentieth century Europe is stealing the treasures of the mind to enrich their languages and cultures. Africa needs back its economy, its politics, its culture, its languages and all its patriotic writers' (Thiong'o 1986:xii).

on his way to Moscow, in 1950, Jusuf Wibisono was surprised to find that the Netherlands was such a small country. Writing in *Mimbar Indonesia* of his impressions, he told of how at primary school in Indonesia, he had studied the geography of the Netherlands from a large book, and the geography of Indonesia from a small book, which had given him the idea that the home country of the colonizers was much larger than the colony (Jusuf Wibisono 1950:7-10). This experience of travel brought him to reconfigure his mental map, as obviously the spatial 'division' of the world had changed, which suddenly made him aware that the topographical representation of both countries during colonial times had not corresponded to their actual proportions.[41]

Jusuf Wibisono was also struck by the fact that Dutch employees of the Indonesian High Commission in The Hague had opposed the transfer of sovereignty in 1949. Some of them had even obstructed the work of the Commission. In his '*Tjatatan2 perdjalanan ke Moskow* (VIII)' (Notes from a trip to Moscow) he described the way some of these Dutch employees had not yet adapted themselves to the new circumstances, and continued to humiliate Indonesians with their arrogant behaviour. For example, they addressed Mr Palar, the leader of the mission to Moscow with the informal second person pronoun instead of calling him 'Excellentie'; they did not know (or pretended not to know) that Batavia had become Djakarta, and they used 'Nederlandsch-Indië' instead of 'Indonesia' (although the person responsible apparently later apologized).[42]

A LOOMING PRESENCE

Indonesians had made progress in achieving their aims, wrote Marakarma, characterizing their country in *wayang kulit*-like style as 'prosperous and peaceful, with a high civilization and a brilliant culture'.[43] It was however not possible to reach perfection at once,

41 It was Adi Negoro who, together with others, produced the first 'Indonesian' atlas in 1952, a translation of a Dutch work. Only in 2009, however, 60 years after independence, was the first official national Indonesian atlas published, the *Atlas Nasional Indonesia.* The Indonesian newspaper *Republika* (6-2-2009) marked the occasion with the headline, 'Finally independent from the Dutch atlas' ('*Akhirnya merdeka dari atlas Belanda*').

42 Jusuf Wibisono 1950:7-10. Similarly, in his article 'Indonesia dan Nederland dimasa depan', Adi Negoro (1950b:27) reported that discussions in the Netherlands were carried on as if Indonesia were still a Dutch colony.

43 '[s]atu negara jang makmur dan damai, tinggi peradabannja dan gemilang kebudajaannja', (Marakarma 1950b:20-1).

he wrote, because of the 'rusty remains of colonialism that still clung to the country and most of its inhabitants'.[44]

Despite Indonesia's newly won sovereignty, the Netherlands was still a looming presence in the early 1950s. It featured constantly in writing published in *Mimbar Indonesia*, as a force to be reckoned with, to be on one's guard against, and as an inhibitor of progress. Contributors to the journal in particular expressed their ongoing worries about the potential influences of Dutch culture in independent Indonesia. After all, in the past, culture had been used purely as a means for colonizing, Vice-President Hatta argued (*Djawaban pemerintah* 1950:9). During the Round Table Conference in 1949, cultural cooperation had been part of the negotiations between the two countries, although it was just a minor topic on the agenda. Ki Hadjar Dewantara, whose critical analysis of the negotiations was published in *Mimbar Indonesia*, reported that culture was seen by the Indonesian negotiators as a potential trap used by the Dutch to gain profit on the political level. From past experience they knew, he said, that the Dutch were not to be trusted, as they had always used undertakings in the field of culture ('*usaha-usaha kebudajaan*') to strengthen and maintain their capitalist and imperialist colonial policies. However the Indonesian negotiators' exclusive focus on politics had meant that negotiations on culture had regularly ended in disappointment and the sense of a 'fait-accompli' (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1950a). According to the Indonesian government, the agreement on culture would remove these anxieties, as the government itself was to regulate and control Dutch culture and to prevent it from entering Indonesia on its own terms (*Djawaban pemerintah* 1950:9).

Nevertheless, a number of phrases in the cultural agreement had made the Indonesian leaders nervous, Dewantara (1950b:14) continued, especially those stating that the relationship between both countries should be based on complete freedom, voluntariness and reciprocity. Besides, he said, the content of several clauses was incompatible with the basis of the agreement. Both parties had to agree for example to promote the exchange of radio programs in the field of culture and news (clause 7). It was also proposed that either party would be allowed to establish and maintain institutes in the field of teaching, art and other cultural fields in the country of the other party (clause 10). To demonstrate the absurdity of the proposals, Ki Hadjar Dewantara reversed the point of view and wondered what would happen if Indonesians began to disseminate

44 'Sisa2 dan karat2 pendjadjahan jang selama ini masih menebal ditanah air kita dan pada sebahagian besar bangsa kita' (Marakarma 1950b:20-1, 27).

Indonesian culture through Dutch radio. Why would they do so anyway? Or, what if Indonesia established cultural organizations in the Netherlands, similar to the Dutch cultural centre in Surabaya that was sponsored by European enterprises? And would it be logical to teach Indonesian science and art to Dutch children? Finally, Ki Hadjar Dewantara warned that if Indonesians did not take care, they might well remain independent in the political meaning of the term, but be culturally recolonized by the Dutch. This would have the effect of endangering the political independence of the Indonesian people.[45]

The use of a national language was another subject that touched on ongoing colonial influence. The language of unity (*bahasa persatuan*) was a crucial theme in the people's struggle to build a national soul (*djiwa kebangsaan*), Adi Negoro (1948:2) wrote in 1948. The question now was how to balance the development of Indonesian as a language of science and in the world of reading and libraries, with its daily use. While most of the Dutch had agreed that Indonesian should become the national language, a 'fanatical gang' ('*segerombolan Belanda jang tekak (fanatik)*') had hoped to maintain Dutch as the language of communication among people from the higher social classes in Indonesia. Their efforts had clearly failed, but language use remained a concern. The 'Obor' column in the journal published questions from readers on matters to do with language, along with answers from the editors. For example, A.R.U. from Bondowoso questioned the continuing use of Dutch subtitles in films, when Indonesian subtitles would be useful for those Indonesians who did not know Dutch.[46] S. Alibasah from Purwokerto wanted to know whether the teaching of Dutch at schools would be abolished.[47] And S. Suwarwotho from Semarang wondered why the

45 Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1950b:14-5. This discourse influenced the discussions during the Konferensi Kebudajaan (Culture Conference) that was held in Jakarta from 4 to 6 August, 1950 (Jassin 1950a:3, 29). Organized by the Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia (LKI, Institute of Indonesian Culture), this conference was called to reflect on the Cultural Agreement between Indonesia and the Netherlands, a result of the 1949 Round Table Conference, and to address the question of Indonesian national culture and its relationship to the culture of other peoples (Kebudayaan nasional dan hubungannya dengan kebudayaan bangsa-bangsa lain) (Nunus Supardi 2007:151). See also Foulcher 1986:15-17.

46 In answer to A.R.U.'s question 'Mengapa kini film2 itu masih mempergunakan teks bahasa Belanda? Djika teks itu dibuat di Djakarta, apa djeleknja bila diganti dengan bahasa Indonesia, sehingga penonton2 jang masih buta huruf dalam bahasa Belanda dapat membatjanja', Mimbar Indonesia's editors wrote: 'Sekarang telah dimulai mengadakan teks bahasa Indonesia' (*Obor* 1950b:2).

47 'Tanja: Apabila R.I.S. telah berdiri, apakah peladjaran basa Belanda di-sekolah-sekolah itu akan dihapuskan?'; 'Djawab: Pasti. Malah di-daerah2 Republik basa Belanda itu telah lama dihapuskan. Kemungkinan kelak basa Belanda hanja diadjarkan kepada mereka jang merasa perlu mempeladjari basa itu (fakultatif)' (*Obor* 1950a:2).

name of the Nederlandsch-Indische Handelsbank was maintained even though 'Nederlandsch-Indië' no longer existed.[48]

'BUSH CLEARING'

All these examples show, as Betts (2004:88) has remarked, that 'the disappearance of formal empire did not mean the end of the colonial experience in the opinion of many critics. For them, decolonization required much more: a fundamental change of outlook and attitude, of heart and mind. In an aptly chosen phrase, "bush clearing" was declared necessary'.

In newly independent Indonesia, not everyone saw this 'bush clearing' as necessary; even for those who did, untying the threads proved to be difficult and complicated. Many of the people involved in cultural policy and in the discourse on culture in the early 1950s were themselves Dutch-educated. Their views were European influenced and they maintained good personal contacts with Dutch artists and intellectuals. Urged on by the new circumstances, however, Indonesia had to build a new relationship with the Netherlands, clearing away what Rosihan Anwar (1950:19) called 'the colonial air that continued to envelop Indonesia' ('*udara kolonial jang terus meliputi Indonesia*'). The continued Dutch presence in some layers of Indonesian society was fiercely criticized, and interference from the Dutch, such as was said to have occurred in the case of an exhibition of 'contemporary Balinese art' in Amsterdam in 1949, would no longer be tolerated.[49]

Meanwhile, cooperation between Indonesia and the Netherlands in the field of culture continued. The Dutch foundation for cultural exchange (STICUSA) sponsored and organized cultural activities in both countries. It also invited Indonesian artists to study in the Netherlands, giving them opportunities to travel elsewhere in Europe. However as Dolk argues in her essay on STICUSA in this volume, any official Dutch–Indonesian cooperation after 1945 stood little chance

48 The answer to S. Suwarwotho's question, 'Konon katanja Nama Nederlandsch Indië itu sudah tidak ada lagi. Tetapi mengapa masih ada nama Nederlandsch Indische Handels Bank?' was 'Djuga akan segara diganti' (Obor 1950c:2).

49 While the original selection of the Balinese paintings and sculptures, created by artists of the new era (*zaman baru*) had been purely based on artistic considerations (*mendjadi melulu ukuran kesenian*), due to the interference of the Indisch Instituut in Amsterdam, several ethnological museum pieces (*'barang-barang jang aneh' jang ada di museum sana*) were added to the exhibition (Armijn Pane 1949:11-3). According to the writer of this article, this resulted in the 'complete failure' ('*complete mislukking*') of the exhibition.

of success in Indonesia. The debates in *Mimbar Indonesia* show that the December 1949 agreement might actually have reinforced the Indonesian rejection of a mutual cultural cooperation, the outcome of which was seen to be mainly of benefit to the Dutch.

In another contribution to this discussion, Abu Hanifah (1950:7) emphasized that Indonesia expected the Netherlands to regard its former colony as an equal partner. As for the position of the Dutch in Indonesia, he declared that all non-Indonesian citizens in Indonesia were foreigners, who were expected to behave in a way that was appropriate to guests. This meant they should not interfere in the internal affairs of Indonesia. For Indonesians, especially those in positions of leadership, it was time to cast off the inferiority complex bred of colonialism and approach the world as an independent and self-confident nation (Abu Hanifah 1950:6-7).

Articles published in *Mimbar Indonesia* on the question of the continuing Dutch presence show that the Indonesian people were anxious to determine their own destiny (*Djawaban pemerintah* 1950:8) and extend their contacts with the world at large. In Sitor Situmorang's words it was 'London, Paris, New Delhi. And maybe Peking. The actual meaning of Western culture, Russian communism and new democracy in China is what matters to us. Between Washington and Moscow, the Netherlands is just too small a factor for us to worry about'.[50]

'WHITHER INDONESIAN CULTURE?'; CONCLUDING REMARKS

When Claire Holt (1967:211) used the words 'Whither Indonesian culture?' to introduce her discussion of Indonesia's polemics on culture from the 1930s onward, called 'The Great Debate', she was quoting the question that dominated cultural life in Indonesia in the early independence period. As Vice-President Hatta remarked in his opening speech to the 1951 Cultural Congress in Bandung, the advent of these regular congresses served to remind Indonesians that this was one of the questions that needed to be asked and re-asked in the process of giving meaning to independence.[51] The publications in *Mimbar Indonesia* – 'a national enterprise' – show

50 'London, Paris, New Delhi. Dan bila kesempatan ada di Peking misalnja: Apa dan bagaimana itu kebudajaan Barat jang sebenarnja? Dan bagaimana pula alam komunis Rusia dan demokrasi baru di Tiongkok? Soal inilah jang actueel pada kita. Faktor Belanda dalam hal ini terlalu ketjil antara Washington dan Moskou untuk kita timbang berat' (Sitor Situmorang 1950a:17).

51 'Memang, setiap waktu apabila ada Kongres Kebudajaan, kita selalu bertanja dalam hati kita: "Kemana arah kebudajaan kita?"' (*Kemana arah* 1951:14).

how the question shaped intellectual debate on cultural matters at the very beginning of Indonesia's existence as an independent sovereign state. They offer an insight into the ways in which this question permeated Indonesian thinking about the role of culture in the process of decolonization, across the whole spectrum of educational and cultural backgrounds and ideological affiliations among members of the urban intellectual elite.

The discussions that were carried on in *Mimbar Indonesia* reveal the openness to the multiple ways in which an 'Indonesian' culture could be conceived, and the enthusiasm for intercultural contacts and influences that marked Indonesian cultural debates of the early 1950s. They also show how the legacies of the past, including cultural heritage and the colonial experience, complicated these discussions and made politics an inescapable dimension of Indonesian cultural life. Many of the topics that dominated the discourse on culture at this time had been around since the 1920s, and even some of those who contributed to the debates were already familiar names in Indonesian cultural history. However the new context of political independence meant that Indonesians approached these questions with a different state of mind and a different view of the rest of the world. And it is a window on those changed attitudes, and the eagerness with which a group of Indonesians seized upon the task of 'giving content to' independence, that *Mimbar Indonesia* provides. The contributions to the journal at this time offer a unique impression of the atmosphere of this new era and of the voices of these new Indonesians. They show us the concrete steps taken in the pursuit of a culture that was 'Indonesian'. But the answer to the question 'Whither Indonesian culture?' remained wide open. Only later in the 1950s would the lines between adherents of the different possible directions become more sharply drawn, and the direction of modern Indonesian culture become more bitterly contested (Holt 1970:163). Even then, however, the question remained unresolved. It remains on the agenda in Indonesia today.

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10

Malang mignon
Cultural expressions of the Chinese, 1940-1960

Melani Budianta

Malang, a hilly resort town in East Java, was from the 1950s to the 1960s a city alive with arts and cultural performances.[1] Born in the 1950s and raised in a *peranakan* (culturally assimilated Chinese) culture that nurtured the taste for traditional dances and theatre, my three sisters and I were avid consumers of, and sometimes amateur participants in, the city's cultural festivities.[2] My father, as a board member of the Malang branch of an association of cigarette companies (Gabungan Perusahaan Rokok or GAPERO), often got free tickets to the best shows in town.[3] Cigarette companies – along with other businesses owned by the Chinese – were regular patrons of such activities. There was a rich variety from which to choose, from our most favourite *wayang orang* Ang Hien Hoo, traditional Javanese theatre owned and played by the *peranakan* Chinese, to *ludruk* (a comic popular theatre form from East Java) and the Chinese puppet shows at the Malang Chinese temple. Modern and traditional dances from all parts of Indonesia, as well as ballet and folk dances from many countries were performed in cultural nights sponsored by the many competing political parties and cultural organizations.

Towards the mid-1960s, however, when the ideological competition between right-wing and left-wing politics was on the rise, we

1 I am indebted to Soebianto Hudyana (Liem Tiauw Bian), writer on Chinese Indonesian issues, for his encouragement and help in collecting research materials, checking the accuracy of my data, connecting me to resource persons, and for his assistance during interviews. I am grateful to all interviewees, who have generously shared their stories, documents and photos.

2 Of the seven children in our family, four of the five girls were born in the 1950s (1950, 1951, 1954, 1957).

3 Tan Hong Bok (born in Pare 1919) moved to Malang in 1947 and served in the management of Toegoemas cigarette company, was board member of the Association of Cigarette Companies (Gabungan Perusahaan Rokok, GAPERO) in Malang, and member of the advisory board of a number of Catholic social and educational foundations in Malang in the 1950s-1960s.

Ang Hin Hoo Wayang Orang Theatre Group in the 1950s.
(courtesy Tjia Tjhoen Liem, Bandung)

learned that stepping into cultural festivals of a wrong camp could lead to an uneasy situation. One night, my three sisters and I were attending one cultural festival that showed lively dances of fishermen, farmers at harvest, and Chinese folk dances. What we did not expect was that after every performance, the crowds would stand up and yell, shouting things like, 'long live President Soekarno' or 'long live Chairman Mao', and other apparently rehearsed political yells with appropriate gestures of raised fists, with which we were not familiar. Embarrassed, we remained glued to our chairs and got nasty stares from the audience. We left early that night.

This essay is a part of my intellectual quest to reconstruct the cultural dynamics of the Malang Chinese in their hey-day in the 1950s and their critical transition in mid-1960s. It aims to understand the context and forces that shaped the diverse cultural articulation, the complex tensions and fusion of culture and politics at the time, and the marked shift after the country was shaken by the 1965 political upheaval. This is a social and cultural history with small caps. Cultural festivals and performances by the Chinese were mostly urban pastimes, which were not intended as highbrow artistic achievements. So far, what I have amassed – patches of personal memories of hobby-club members and networks of friendship that continued despite ideological differences – amounts to snapshots of everyday life in a small town.

In tracing the cultural history of the Chinese in Malang, I am using my own personal memory and the memories of my father's generation, making use of the network of relatives, their friends, and friends of friends.[4] In doing so, I am reconstructing a web of social relations of a larger dimension. Many of the people I interviewed had left the city many years previously. Their memories of living in Malang sometimes overlapped, and sometimes represented different time periods, as key events, memorable places and people emerged and the segments of a bigger social and historical perspective began to take shape. With the distance of time and space, many of them shared their conscious reflection of what the Chinese communities in Malang meant to them. In the words of Crishohn (2001:195) citing Halbawchs, it is 'a matter not just of consciously lived time but of socially lived space and the collective representation of that space'.

This essay shows how the social and cultural fabric of Chinese communities in this small town in East Java in the 1950s and 1960s was held together by a mixture of Dutch-Malay-Chinese-Javanese cultural milieu, despite differing political or ideological positions. The collected memories of *opa* and *oma*, *tante* and *oom* in Malang reveal the way daily life was indirectly connected to the forces of the nation embroiled in Cold War politics. It is a cultural history from below, which will complement both studies on the political scene of the 1950s and 1960s and macro-scale studies on Indonesian Chinese. By connecting the politically divisive 1960s to the fluid cultural dynamics in the daily life among the Chinese communities in Malang in the 1950s and 1960s, this study complicates the accepted dichotomies of assimilationist versus integrationist, or Left versus Right, which loom large in discussion to date about the Indonesian Chinese and the political scene of 1960s Indonesia.

In its focus on Malang as research site, this essay is comparable to historical and sociological studies on specific sections of Indonesian Chinese communities in Yogyakarta and Surakarta at different times (Didi Kwartanada 2002; Rustopo 2007). Highlighting the structures of feeling of the fifties and sixties, my micro-scale research also complements and puts a cultural angle on the dominant political and macro perspective about the Indonesian Chinese in this period (Coppel 1983; Heidhues 1988; Leo Suryadinata 2002).

4 Starting with my *peranakan* family that is culturally assimilated and lost cultural ties to China, my journey took me to meet others in Chinese speaking families, ones that are generally termed as *totok* or the more recent migrants. Initially focusing only on the *peranakan* culture, I soon found out that the boundary between the *peranakan* and *totok* categories was porous, and it would be more fruitful for me to see the interaction of the Chinese in Malang, from diverse backgrounds, through the arts and cultural scene.

I begin by looking at Malang from the beginning of the nineteenth century as the transit site for Chinese migration to and from other cities in East Java, with their hybrid culture. Then I contextualize the migration in the complicated power struggle of the revolutionary era, showing the importance of the experience in shaping the generations of Chinese who later played a significant role in the cultural scene of the 1950s and 1960s. I trace different generations of Chinese intellectuals and literati who shaped or were shaped by the Malang cultural scene, many of whom later played a role at the national level. The main thrust of the essay is my discussion of the various cultural groups and associations emerging in the 1950s, with diverse and usually competing goals and cultural orientation. I examine how they negotiated with larger forces, which climaxed in the 1965 communist-cleansing tragedy.

MALANG AND THE MIXED CULTURE OF THE CHINESE MIGRANTS

Surrounded by hills and volcanic mountains, Malang, which is 80 miles to the south of the harbour city Surabaya, has been known since colonial times for its plantations (tea, coffee, sugar, and sweet potato), and as a residential and resort area. Linked with railroads and invested with good infrastructure, the Dutch government gave it the status of a municipal government in 1914.

The population of Malang grew with the growth of the city, attracting Chinese migrants. In 1890, when Malang's total population was 12,040 there were 1,542 Chinese, making them the second largest group after the 'natives' (*inlander*).[5] By 1940, the number of Chinese migrants had increased to 12,233 out of the total population of 169,316 although they were now outnumbered by the Europeans – the number of whom had grown from 459 to 13,867 in 50 years (Van Schaik 1996:29). This demographic data shows the strong growth of European presence in the colonial era. The nature of Malang as a Dutch residential and administrative town encircled by Dutch administered *onderneeming* (plantations) nurtured the Dutch-speaking milieu amongst the *peranakan* Chinese, who were mostly educated in the Dutch school system.

The social and cultural history of the Malang Chinese can be traced from the *hong boen* (funeral association) called Ang Hien Hoo (established in 1910), which used the Eng An Kong Temple as its

5 There were four official categories, Natives, Chinese, Foreign Orientals, and Europeans (Van Schaik, 1996:29).

headquarters.[6] As in other cities in Asia, the Chinese temple, besides having a religious function, became the centre of social and cultural activities that began with the need to give decent burial ceremonies and facilities to the Chinese migrants.[7] The spread of funeral associations throughout Java in the 1900s occurred at the same time as the establishment of social organizations such as Tiong Hwa Hwee Koan, which founded schools for Chinese migrants. Coppel (1994) notes that the underlying force of this initiative was the awakening of Chinese nationalism among Chinese migrants, which was later counterbalanced by the establishment of the Hollandsch-Chineesche School (HCS, Dutch Chinese Schools) by the Dutch in 1908. Children graduating from HCS could go to the junior secondary school (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs or MULO) and later to the senior secondary school (Algemene Middelbare School or AMS), which were both popular with Chinese students of middle-class background in Malang.

The influence of Dutch education, the common bond of sentiment among Chinese migrants, and strong local mooring were strongly reflected in the articles published in the 25th anniversary book of Ang Hien Hoo, the *hong boen* association at the Ang En Kong temple in Malang (Suma et al. 1935). The anniversary book was written mostly in Dutch-inflected Malay, with a few front pages in Mandarin (Suma et al. 1935). Dozens of well-written articles in Malay submitted from Solo, Surabaya, Madiun, Bandung, Semarang, and various districts in Malang discuss the history of Ang Hien Hoo, connecting it to wide ranging issues, from politics in mainland China to social and cultural issues. In the foreword, the editor of the *Gedenkboek* (Suma et al. 1935:1) addresses the issue of differences amongst the Chinese migrants:

> The birth of Ang Hien Hoo was based on 'democracy', the principle upon which this association opened its door to different groups of ethnic Chinese without considering whether they were rich or poor, *totok* or *peranakan*. As long as they behaved well, they could join the association. No wonder that the birth of Ang Hien Hoo then solved the complicated problems of the ethnic Chinese.[8]

6 The Eng An Kong temple in Malang was built in 1825.

7 The funeral associations or *hong boen* spread in the early 1900s in many cities in Java, starting in Batavia, then Semarang, Pekalongan in Central Java, Surabaya, Probolinggo, Pasuruan, and Malang (Suma et al. 1935).

8 Krana lahirnja Ang Hien Hoo ada mengambil dasar 'democratie' dimana itoe perkoempoelan memboeka pintoenja boeat berbagi-bagi golongan Tionghoa zonder pandeng soeal kaja dan miskin, totok dan pranakan asal berklakoean baek bisa ditrima mendjadi anggotanja, maka tida oesa diboeat heran kapan lahirnja Ang Hien Hoo lantas banjak mengilangkan kakoesoetannja sia-hwee Tionghoa di itoe waktoe.

The article addresses the heterogeneity of the Malang Chinese, in particular the cultural division between the *peranakan* Chinese and the *totok* Chinese. In general, the two terms differentiate between older migrants who were assimilated to local cultures from those newer migrants with closer cultural affiliation towards China. As social constructions, these terms had no clear cut boundaries, yet they were terms of social differentiation which were used by the Chinese in Indonesia to categorize cultural differences among themselves. Language was one of the most apparent markers. Inability to speak Mandarin or one of the Chinese dialects was an indication that one was culturally distanced from one's homeland. There was mutual prejudice and condescension between the two groups, as difficulty of communication and different cultural milieus set them apart. However Ang Hien Hoo, in its organization as *hong boen* and its varied cultural productions (Chinese puppet shows and dragon dances, Javanese *wayang orang* and gamelan music), served as a cultural space for these two groups to interact and work together.

The anniversary book, half of which comprised advertisements of various companies in Malang (and a few from Surabaya), shows the middle-class base in Malang in the 1930s, with businesses serving as patrons for social and cultural activities. It also reveals existing networks of Chinese living in Java based on Chinese social organizations. Most obvious is the strong role of the educated *peranakan* Chinese, who spoke Malay and Dutch. The book exemplifies the way that Malang in the 1930s served as a multicultural site for intellectual and cultural dialogue between Chinese intellectuals, with close ties between Malang intellectuals and those living in the neighbouring East Javanese cities, especially Surabaya.

THE AMT GENERATION AND THE 1947 MIGRATION

The Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945 was a life-changing experience for many Chinese, including those in East Java. Many told stories of their houses being looted, men kidnapped and slaughtered, and families fleeing for safety from one city to another, including to Malang and its neighbouring cities (Soebianto 2008:1). One major cultural policy of the Japanese Occupation was the closing of Dutch schools, which forced many *peranakan* Chinese to enter Chinese language schools. In Malang, elementary school children from *peranakan* families were moved from the Dutch school to Chiao Tung Shiee Siauw, the Chinese school, where they got their first orientation to the Mandarin language. Japanese

authorities also set up an organization called Kakyo Shokay (Association of Migrant Chinese), and Keibotai, (Chinese armed civilians to help Japanese Police) which grouped the *totok* and the *peranakan* together, pushing them to interact more closely than before.[9]

During the Japanese Occupation, Chinese intellectuals who had shown resentment against the Japanese Occupation of China faced danger. One of these was Siauw Giok Tjhan, a radical young editor of the *Matahari* newspaper in Surabaya, who fled to Malang for safety. The exodus of Siauw Giok Tjan and his brother Siauw Giok Bie to Malang was a crucial factor in the subsequent politicizing of Malang Chinese intellectuals. When the Japanese recruited Chinese youth to form a special army called Keibotai, Siauw and other Malang Chinese leaders devised strategies not only for avoiding conflict with the Indonesian armed civilian militia established by Japan, called Keibodan, but also strategies to use the Keibotai to 'awaken in the Chinese youth the awareness of being the Indonesian young generation that should work together with other Indonesian youth to fight for the sake of Indonesian people and achieve national independence'.[10]

In the spirit of the fight for independence, youth organizations sprouted and young people all over Indonesia volunteered to arm themselves, many using the term Angkatan Muda Indonesia (AMI, Indonesian Youth Regiment) (Muhammad Umar Syadat Hasibuan 2008). To show the existence of the Chinese youth, especially at a time when the loyalty of the Chinese was questioned, Siaw Giok Bie and Go Gien Tjwan mobilized Malang Chinese youth by creating the Angkatan Muda Tionghoa (AMT, Peranakan Chinese Youth Regiment). AMT leaders met with Bung Tomo, a militant nationalist fighter from Surabaya who formed a youth civilian army called Barisan Pemberontakan Rakyat Indonesia (BPRI, Indonesian People's Resistance Front), to strategize their moves together with the Indonesian forces.[11] At the same time, the Keibotai was changed to become the Blue Cross, which sent Chinese youth to rescue the wounded during the revolution, most notably during the 10 November battle against the Dutch army in Surabaya. The Blue Cross supported Indonesian fighters with food and supplies

9 From Santoso Budiman (Kang Biauw Kwie), interview, Malang, 1-8-2009. Also see Siauw Giok Tjhan 1981:72.

10 Siauw 1981:75. Keibotai perlu digunakan 'sebagai penggugah kesadaran pemuda peranakan Tionghoa, bahwa mereka adalah putera Indonesia, yang perlu ikut serta dengan putera-putera Indonesia lainnya untuk memperjuangkan perbaikan nasib bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia dan mencapai kemerdekaan nasional.'

11 Go Gien Tjwan, interview, Jakarta, 3-7-2008 and Santoso Budiman, interview, Malang, 1-8-2009.

sent via the Surabaya-Malang train, and helped remove the sick and the wounded from the battlefront to safer areas in Mojokerto, Pasuruan and Malang (Siauw 1981:77-8).

During these revolutionary years, the Japanese-enforced policy to group all Chinese students in one educational system was abandoned. Students oriented towards China went to Chinese schools. Meanwhile, anticipating that the Dutch school system would be reinstalled, teachers and ex-students of the Dutch school from pre-Japanese Occupation days used the umbrella of the AMT to create a 'crash course' to catch up with what they had missed. From 1946 to 1949, most of the AMT 'crash course' alumni left Malang to continue their university studies in Surabaya, Jakarta or the Netherlands.[12] The AMT educational service was the nursing bed of Chinese Indonesian professionals, entrepreneurs and intellectuals in the Old and New Order eras, such as Tan Hoo Tong, who in the late 1950s was appointed as Indonesian ambassador to Hungary and Liem King Hok, who served at the Ministry of Finance during the New Order. The AMT generation – the political as well as the educational wing – were mostly Dutch-speaking *peranakan* Chinese, who later occupied different if not opposing roles and ideological positions in Indonesian history. Go Gien Tjwan and Siauw Giok Tjhan became state officials of the Soekarno era,[13] Siauw Giok Bie led the Malang branch of Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia (BAPERKI, Council for Deliberations on Indonesian Citizenship), and Oey Hay Djoen, became a Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) activist in Yogyakarta and Jakarta. All three were later persecuted as leftists and imprisoned during the New Order. Many other AMT crash course alumni were conscripted or volunteered to serve in the Indonesian military for a certain period in their lives, and some even served in the Army detention unit during the communist cleansing era of the mid-1960s.[14]

12 Amongst hundreds of the AMT students were Han Hoo Tjwan (Han Awal), one of Indonesia's leading architects who helped design the Conference of New Emerging Forces (CONEFO) project in 1960s and received awards for the conservation of the National Archives building and Dutch colonial buildings in the 1990s; Liem Siok Ien, who worked as an engineer in the Indonesian Navy; Willy Halim Indrakusuma, a dentist, who later owned leading travel agencies; Tjan Hong Tjhiang, now a retired chemist from Unilever, who once served in the Navy as head of 1965 convict detention unit. For a more detailed biography of the individuals mentioned in this essay, see Sam Setyautama 2008.

13 Go Gien Tjwan left Malang in 1947 to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jakarta before going to the Netherlands for his studies, and upon his return to Jakarta in 1955 served as Director of the National News Agency, Antara (interview, Jakarta 3-7-2008). See Siauw's memoir (1981).

14 AMT crash course alumni, Focus Group Discussion, Jakarta 22-1-2009.

At the same time as many members of the AMT generation were leaving Malang, there was another wave of incoming migration of Chinese from neighbouring cities (including Kediri, Pasuruan, Nganjuk, Jember, Blitar and Pare) to Malang in 1947, during the first Dutch military aggression. Most of the *peranakan* Chinese in these neighbouring communities made a living from trading and distributing agricultural crops in villages and small towns (Yang 2004). It was a chaotic time, when the Indonesian military was pulling all forces to fight the Dutch. The militia were on the loose and the country was divided into Dutch occupied regions and regions belonging to the Republic. To protect their lives and belongings, some Chinese communities armed themselves, or moved to the Dutch occupied area, causing further questioning of their loyalty. Some were forced by armed civilians to migrate and had their belongings looted, and many were killed (Stanley and Arief W. Djati 2004).

The 1947 migration caused a demographic shift in the city. When the Dutch military occupied the city in 1947, they let the homeless Chinese migrants from neighbouring areas stay in empty houses vacated during the Japanese Occupation by their former Dutch owners, or left by the Indonesian military officers who had probably taken them from the Dutch. The elite residential areas in Malang – the streets of Ijen, Dempo, Raung, Panderman – were thus distributed to the new Chinese migrants, who later registered with the housing office[15] and acquired legal documents.[16] Most of the new owners in the central and southwest areas of Malang were Dutch-educated *peranakan* Chinese, who were professionals working as doctors and consultants, managers or directors of the industries, or middle-class entrepreneurs. Less well connected migrant *peranakan* Chinese spread in pockets of unoccupied spaces in the eastern part of the city.[17] The Mandarin speaking Chinese or *totok*

15 In the 1940s, the housing offices called Versluis and Hom gave the new owners permits to use the houses and collected rents. These were originally Dutch institutions, which in the revolutionary period were still operating, most possibly taken over by local staff.

16 An article titled 'Perkembangan penduduk dan persoalan-persoalannja' (Population growth and its problems) in the 50th anniversary book published by the Malang municipality in 1964 discussed this demographic shift as an unresolved problem of the city, whereby 'the Chinese with the back-up of strong capital, and still owning wealth under legal protection before the revolution, occupied a great spread of the formerly Dutch occupied residential area' (Masjarakat Tionghoa dengan modal jang kuat dibelakangnja dan masih memiliki kekajaan dibawah undang2 jang legal sebelum revolusi, menduduki bagian tersebar dari perumahan2 Balanda tersebut). The writer believed that there would be a future of 'revolutionary changes for public welfare, and not for one class' (pastilah dihari hari jang akan datang hal ini akan mengalami perobahan2 jg revolusioner menudju kepada kepentingan umum dan bukan buat satu golongan). See Mochamad Hanafiah et al. 1964:56.

17 Ariel Heryanto, interview, Jakarta, 19-11-2009.

resided closer to the trading and business areas in the Chinatown and its adjacent areas.[18]

THE 1950S CULTURAL SCENE

Arts and culture of the 1950s in Malang reflected the needs of the urban middle-class population, including the Chinese. Unlike Surabaya, which grew to be a bustling business and trading centre in Java, Malang retained its character as a residential area. Plantations and cigarette companies became two of the most flourishing industries. Other businesses catered to the leisure and lifestyle of the growing urban middle class, such as the garment and fashion industry, flower shops, photo studios, restaurants, house and building appliance suppliers, printing and publishing. Many of the residents were white-collar professionals (medical doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants), who acquired money and time to spend on leisure activities.[19] The cigarette industries – and their association called GAPERO – became the backbone of cultural philanthropy in Malang, funding arts, cultural, social and educational activities particularly.

In the 1950s, the heterogeneous Chinese population, both *totok* and *peranakan*, had clubhouses and informal groups to organize leisure activities, such as sports, theatre, dance and music. The Cantonese who lived in the trading area had their own club house, which showed theatre, dance and music in their own tongue.[20] The Mandarin-speaking population had various associations, such as Sheng Huo Hsuch You Hui, Chung Hua Tsung Hui, Shin Li She, Giok Yong Kong Hui, Kung Chao Hui Hui Koa, Tsing Niem Hui and the women's association of Hwa Djian Fu Ni Hui (Gapar Wirjosoedibyo et al. 1954:133).

The popular sport for the middle-class Chinese directors, managers and professionals in Malang was tennis. In the early 1950s they formed two tennis clubs called STAR and Rukun, and built five

18 There were exceptions to this generalized pattern. Some Mandarin and Hokkien speaking families who were well connected also resided in the elite residential area, where the Dutch used to live. At the same time, not all families residing in this area were well off.

19 In 1950 the Chinese population in the city numbered 11,451 a decrease of around 800 from the recorded population of 12,323 in 1940 (Stanley 2004). The Chinese population later grew to 29,402 (of a total population of 445,000) by the end of 1968.

20 Go Ing Hok (interview, 13-17-2010) often watched the Chinese opera in Cantonese in the Cantonese club house near his house in the Chinatown area. Most of the Cantonese migrants were carpenters working for furniture shops.

tennis courts on Jl. Pahlawan Trip. While Rukun served to breed young amateur tennis players, STAR provided a leisure space for family gatherings and socializing. Costume parties, in which families donned costumes of different ethnic groups (Balinese, Sumatran and so forth), comic trans-dressing, and friendly tournament trips to other cities were some of the STAR favourite events. Another well-known hobby club founded in the 1950s was the Perkumpulan Olah Raga, Seni Tari dan Dharmawisata (POSTD, Organization for Sports, Dance and Tourism), which organized mostly sports activities, such as table tennis and badminton for its members.

One of the most prominent clubs where *peranakan* Chinese 'celebrities' gathered for cultural exposure was the Pusat Pergaulan Umum (PPU, Social Centre), with dance (especially ballroom dancing), musical group bands (one of which was the Hawaiian Band called KES or 'Kloek en Sterk' ('Courageous and Strong'), and theatrical performances as their main activities, using the auditorium on top of the Rex movie house on Jl. Kabupaten as their meeting place.[21]

A main attraction of the PPU was amateur Malay *toneel* or theatre, which was already well established in Malang. One patron of Malang's amateur theatre was Fred Young, a well-known theatre and film director in the 1950s who owned the Rex movie house where many of the PPU social and cultural activities took place.[22] Another influential figure in amateur theatre in Malang was Njoo Cheong Seng, a prolific novelist, playwright, screenwriter, theatre and film director from the 1930s.[23] Njoo Cheong Seng had travelled the world with his second wife and popular actress Fifi Young, and had a long history with theatre groups in the 1930s and 1940s such as Miss Riboet's Orion and Dardanella, before settling during the Japanese Occupation in Malang, where he married his fourth wife, Huang Lin, a Mandarin teacher turned amateur actress. According to Myra Sidharta (2004), 'Njoo found the most suitable intellectual atmosphere in Malang' and established an intellectual circle that

21 *Peranakan* Chinese who did not belong to this milieu used to sneer at the club's 'Western' orientation, by giving its abbreviation, PPU, a new interpretation, *Pepet-pepetan udel* (navel-rubbing, mocking the 'improper' way young men and women hugged each other in ballroom dances), Tjia Tjoen Liem and Tjia Liang Koei, interview, Bandung, 31-1-2009.

22 Fred Young, a screenwriter and film producer, was born in Semarang in 1900 and later moved to Malang. He joined the Bintang Soerabaja theatre group in 1941 and was active in its theatre production until 1948. From 1949 to 1954 he produced nine films under the Bintang Soerabaja film company, most possibly an extension of the theatre group. Later he went on to found his own film company, serving as producer, director and screenwriter until 1975. He died in Malang in 1977.

23 Njoo Cheong Seng and Fred Young had collaborated in theatre as well as film production, before and during the 1950s.

included photographer Ong Kian Bie and writer and illustrator Tan Liep Poen.[24] Throughout the 1950s, Njoo Cheong Seng was active in directing plays performed by amateur players who were also PPU members.[25]

One of the most staged plays in the 1950s was Njoo Cheong Seng's *Malang mignon* (or Malang chic, a name the author also used for his flower shop in Malang in his retirement), a 'melodrama in 4 acts', performed for the first time by amateur group in Malang. *Malang mignon* was premiered in Malang on 23-24 January 1951, commissioned by the Ma Hua Hsiau Yu Hui school, which shows how the *totok* and the *peranakan* worlds coalesced in local theatre. The play was directed by the author, Njoo Cheong Seng himself (under the pen name of M. d'Amour), who was entering the 'amateur' world for the first time after 29 years of earning his living with professional groups (d'Amour 1951:84). The melodrama depicted the tragic life of Giok Hoa, a sweet but sickly young wife with two children, whose husband, Sing Tjiang has been having an affair with his childhood first love turned modern femme fatale, namely Bonita Fonk or the 'Malang mignon'. The melodrama was a tear-jerker in its portrayal of the suffering of the two children at the hands of the cruel stepmother Bonita after Giok Hoa dies of a broken heart, later followed by the death of her beloved son Armand.

The play's theme, a warning against the lure of the flesh away from family responsibility, had been a common theme in the popular Malay novels written by the *peranakan* Chinese from the early twentieth century. Similarly the evil lure embodied in a young woman who has been led astray by modern ways was a familiar plot. The play is interesting in its mixing of languages and cultural references, which was a phenomenon that characterized the *peranakan* Chinese world. The dominant language register of the play is poetic Malay, with a propensity towards *syair*-like rhyming (a-a), especially in melodramatic moments between the dying mother and her son and daughter. The sentimentality of the play was counterbalanced by two comic characters speaking in colloquial, mixed languages, who were modelled after the American comic characters 'Bud-Abott and Lou Costello' (d'Amour 1951:88). Representing the

24 For further information on Njoo Cheong Seng's biography and works, see Myra Sidharta (2004:24-51) 'Njoo Cheong Seng; Penulis novel, drama, dan syair' in *Dari penjaja tekstil sampai super woman*.

25 Malang theatre-goers remembered watching the restaging of Njoo's older plays, *Gagak lodra* and *Djembatan merah* which popularized patriotic songs composed by the famous song writer, Gesang. They also recalled watching the plays performed at the theatre house Emma in Malang in 1940s by the professional theatre group called Bintang Soerabaja with Fifi Young, then Njoo's wife and theatre prima donna.

language spectrum of Malang *peranakan* Chinese, the clown scene freely mixed Dutch, Hokkien and Javanese diction, and political jargon, with physics and literary terms from the *wayang* repertoire also blended in, making almost nonsensical noise but showing the intellectual milieu of the *peranakan* audience. Similarly, the French word *mignon* and titles of other plays showed references to Western literary tradition.

Besides original plays, the Malang Chinese also staged plays translated from Chinese, such as the famous play *Mawar hutan* (Rose of the woods), a translation of the play titled Chen Chuen.[26] *Mawar hutan* was originally a Chinese propaganda piece against Japanese Occupation. The title of the play was the nickname of a female spy sent to marry a Chinese landlord who worked for the Japanese ruler to quell the Chinese resistance movement. The script used for the PPU performance in the mid-1950s was amended and shortened to erase much of the explicit propaganda, leaving only the romance and the suspense. Both *Malang mignon* and *Mawar hutan* showed that in the *toneel* tradition amongst the Chinese in Malang influences from the West and China were fluidly transformed into mixed local bred expression.

A scene from a 1950s performance of *Mawar hutan.* (courtesy Panca Budhi Social Organization, Malang)

26 See the manuscript of *Mawar hutan* by Chen Chuen (n.d.). The identity of the Chinese playwright was not known.

For Malang Chinese who did not fancy Western dance, Mandarin art or the modern *toneel*, the option was local performance forms. Among the genres of local performing arts that attracted the interest of the Malang *peranakan* Chinese were *ketoprak* and *ludruk*, genres of folk comic theatre that use East Javanese dialect. The most popular local performance form among the Chinese was *wayang orang* (a form of dance drama based on *wayang kulit*). Many older generation Chinese who migrated to Malang from surrounding villages and small cities missed the *wayang orang* shows that they used to watch in their home villages. Therefore, when the all-Chinese *wayang orang* theatre was founded by some board members of Ang Hien Hoo in Malang in 1953, it was enthusiastically received by the Chinese in Malang. Hiring a Javanese dance and gamelan music trainer and *wayang orang* instructor from Yogyakarta, this amateur club recruited dancers, players, and gamelan players from all walks of life within the Chinese communities.[27] On 24 December 1956 the group made news as it performed in Solo in the very home of *wayang orang*, at the theatre used by the top *wayang orang* company in the country, Sriwedari. The two-night performance played to a full house, as the Solo audience was curious to see how the Chinese from East Java performed their traditional art.[28]

Wayang orang activities of the Malang Chinese received strong sponsorship from cigarette companies there. Liem Ting Tjwan, the owner of Orong-Orong cigarette company, sponsored the Ang Hien Hoo group's participation in the national *wayang orang* competition in Solo in 1962.[29] The popularity of the Ang Hien Hoo *wayang orang* performances led to an invitation for the group to perform in front of President Soekarno in his Jakarta palace in 1960. This was the occasion when Nelly Ie, the Ang Hien Hoo prima donna who enthralled the president with her mastery of the Javanese art, received her new name Ratna Juwita, by which she was later widely known.

Hobby club activities in various forms mentioned above did not exhaust the cultural expressions of 13,000 *peranakan* and *totok*, who made up the Chinese population of Malang in 1954 (barely 5% of the total population of the city).[30] As both pastime and profession,

27 Including students, housewives, shop attendants and employers and employees.

28 KSN 1956. Rustopo (2007) noted that from the 1950s to early 1960s it was common to find *peranakan wayang orang* groups, even in remote villages.

29 In the 1962 competition, Ang Hien Hoo competed with 17 other non-profit *wayang orang* groups from all over Java (Jakarta, Bandung, Solo, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Purwokerto and Kediri) plus one from Pekanbaru, five of which were also led and played by *peranakan* dancers. See Rustopo 2007:155-6.

30 Figures taken from the table in Gapar Wirjosoedibjo et al. (1954:74) showing the growth of Malang population (only 3 categories are given; Indonesian, Foreign Orientals and Foreign Europeans). The approximate number of Chinese mentioned in this paper is based on the number of 13,088 Foreign Orientals out of the 270,048 population total.

these cultural activities encompassed the diverse taste of a heterogeneous population, from the China oriented, to Dutch educated, Malay modernists, and lovers of indigenous performing arts.[31] Although the Malang Chinese hobby clubs were mostly exclusive – from, by and for the Malang Chinese communities – there were some points of convergence.[32] Ang Hien Hoo *wayang orang* theatre was one such meeting point. The Ang Hien Hoo *wayang* performances drew together *totok* and *peranakan*, and a broad general audience as well. These cultural activities provided space for the *peranakan* Chinese not only to socialize among themselves, but also to engage in charity and fundraising. They served as one channel by which the Chinese inhabitants and middle-sized companies owned by the Chinese circulated part of their money and profits in cultural philanthropy.

GENJER-GENJER: CULTURAL POLITICS IN THE 1960S

The early 1960s in Malang was marked by the growing involvement of political parties as patrons in the arts and culture scene. Among the Malang Chinese[33] there was a noticeable polarization towards left and right wing politics. The situation was intensified by the political climate of Soekarno's 'Crush-Malaysia' and anti-West campaigns in 1963.

In his written address for the 50th anniversary book of the Malang municipality in 1964, the then Mayor of Malang, Koesno Soeroatmodjo evoked this sense of crisis, when he appealed to all state and private organizations 'that claimed to be the instruments

31 Outside these Chinese clubhouses and cultural associations, there are clubs belonging to other diasporas. Mingki Hadi Soesastro, who was raised in Malang in the 1950s, remembered that the remaining small Dutch communities in Malang 'through the Kunstkring continued to organize various cultural activities, including plays (*toneel*)', one of which was a mystery play in Dutch called *Ebbenhouten oliefant* (Ebony elephant) in the mid-1950s (Hadi M. Soesastro 2008). The Dutch also had their SAVAM (Sport en Amusement Vereniging also known as ANIEM for Algemeene Nederlands-Indisch Electrisch Maatschappij, Malang, Association of Sports and Amusement Association of Malang Netherlands Indies Electric Company) and the Vereniging voor Huisvrouwen (Housewives' Club). The Indian diaspora had the Indian League Pusat Malang.

32 Other than these more or less exclusively Chinese clubs, there was the Malang Rotary Club, also an elite group engaging in social and cultural philanthropy, consisting of Europeans, Chinese and Indonesians. The Rotary Club was suspended in 1964 during the anti-imperialism campaign, (Tjia Tjoen Liem and Tjia Liang Koei, interview, Bandung, 31-1-2009).

33 From 1963, the Chinese Indonesians were grouped as 'WNI Keturunan' in the municipal statistics to differentiate them from those holding Chinese citizenship who were placed in the category of 'WN Asing'. Although the term 'WNI Keturunan' initially meant Indonesian citizen of [foreign] descent, the term was eventually used to refer solely to Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent. In Malang in 1963, the number of WNI Keturunan had doubled since 1954 from 13,088 to 26,655 of the total 1963 population of 412,698 (Soetikno 1969:117).

of the Indonesian revolution, to raise awareness towards the holy duty and calling – especially in this trying time during economic difficulties and in the spirit of confrontation against imperialism and neocolonialism à la the "Malaysia project"'.[34] That 'holy duty' was to come together as a united front to face the challenges of the time.[35] When Kusno mentioned the united front, he was referring to Soekarno's concept of NASAKOM (Nasionalisme-Agama-Komunisme) the fusion of the nationalism, religion and communism. The united front was crucial, for Soekarno had conjured up for Indonesia quite formidable enemies, by denouncing Malaysia's independence as a British neo-colonial ploy and pulling out of the United Nations.

On the ground, however, the nationalist, religious and communist fronts were not easily united. In fact, towards the middle of the 1960s the competition between the forces was keenly sensed, even in the realm of the arts. The main promoters of arts and culture in Malang during this Confrontation era of the early 1960s were not club houses, but religious based institutions, schools, social political organizations and political parties, especially their youth sections, which were competing with one another in mobilizing the Malang youth. The Chinese youth were spread in different groups, such as Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia (PERHIMI, Indonesian University Students' Association),[36] Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia (PMKRI, Indonesian Catholic Students' Association), Pemuda Katolik (Catholic Youth) or the Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (GMKI, Indonesian Protestant-Christian Students' Movement). On national holidays, these youth organizations would be out in force, competing against one other by putting forth the best of their marching drum bands, a popular activity amongst youth organizations, which was in tune with the spirit of the time.

Different artistic preferences were apparent in the kinds of arts championed by the different political organizations. In cultural festivals, the leftist groups would show folk art and dances depicting the lively spirit of fisherfolk, workers and farmers. One of the most popular such dances was the *Genjer-genjer* dance, depicting village women harvesting *genjer*, water hyacinth that grows wild on river banks, turning the wild plants into food during famine. The *Gen-*

34 'jang mengaku dirinja sebagai alat revolusi Nasional Indonesia, menjadari tugas dan kewadjiban jang sutji ini, lebih2 dalam keadaan seluruh bangsa dan Negara Republik Indonesia diliputi oleh suasana kepribadian keprihatian dalam mengatasi kesulitan2 dalam bidang ekonomi dan disampingnja diliputi oleh suasana konprontasi dalam usaha kita bersama untuk mengganjang sifat2 imperialisme, kolonialisme dan neo-kolonialisme ala projek "Malaysia".' (no page).

35 See 'Kata pengantar Walikota Malang' in Mochamad Hanafiah et al. 1964.

36 PERHIMI evolved from the prewar Ta Hsueh Hsueh Sheng Hui, and was affiliated with BAPERKI.

jer-genjer dance symbolized the struggle and resilience of the common people. Leftist art, in line with PRC artistic taste of the time, was often shown together with dances performed by students of Chinese schools, or Chinese dancers from the mainland who were touring under the sponsorship of the Chinese embassy.

The PPI and Pemuda Rakyat were also active in promoting indigenous performing arts, especially *ludruk*, which had wide appeal among the grass roots and the common people. Realizing that their elitist Western art lacked grass root appeal, the Malang PMKRI formed their own *ludruk* group. One of the popular *ludruk* plays in Malang and Surabaja was *Pak Sakerah* (Mr Sakerah), the story of a Madurese underdog working in a sugar plantation, who rebelled against Dutch colonial repression.[37]

In the meantime, Siauw Giok Bie used the political space offered by BAPERKI, an organization that focused on issues of Indonesian citizenship.[38] Nationalistic and loyal to President Soekarno, BAPERKI was keen to keep the NASAKOM unity, and greatly resented the Catholic Chinese withdrawing their support. Under the leadership of Siauw Giok Tjan in Jakarta and Siauw Giok Bie in Malang, BAPERKI fought for equality for all citizens, regardless of race, religion and ethnicity, and fought against discrimination of any kind. BAPERKI activists felt that they received support from the leftist leaning organizations, and were keen to work together with them. This in turn alienated many *peranakan* Chinese people, who opposed the leftist and communist front. Some *peranakan* literati, such as Tan Sien Giok, who did not feel at home with either the right or the left, preferred to support other national political parties, such as the PNI, which had a strong base in Malang.

By the mid-1960s, the split amongst the close-knit *peranakan* Chinese took the form of a polemic between those who were supporting integration versus those arguing for assimilation. The BAPERKI group belonged to the first camp, believing that it was the right of every citizen to retain his or her cultural tradition, including one's name and cultural orientation. The proponents of assimilation, most of them of Catholic background, believed that assimilation to the indigenous population was the best way to solve the Chinese 'prob-

37 Henri Supriyanto (interview, Malang, 12-10-2008).

38 Oei Tjoe Tat noted that in the 1950s BAPERKI got much support from *peranakan* Chinese in Indonesia, and managed to open branches in small cities; up to 100 branches altogether, including in Malang. During the first Indonesian general election for the House of Representatives in 1955, BAPERKI apparently got votes from non-Chinese citizens as well, as the number of votes they got in Jakarta, Tangerang, Malang and Lawang exceeded the number of registered Chinese Indonesian citizens voters in those cities (Oei Tjoe Tat 1995:84). See also Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Stanley Adi Prasetyo 1994.

lem'. The integrationists, who were keen supporters of the anti-discrimination policy, accused the assimilationists of robbing the Chinese of their right to keep their names and cultural traditions. Many of the assimilationists, who proposed the changing of Chinese names, were already culturally assimilated and had long since adopted local indigenous names. For them, the cultural approach was the best way. A journalist working for *Terompet Masjarakat* (People's Trumpet) in 1960s, Oei Hiem Hwie, who was then in his 30s, witnessed this growing tension among Malang senior activists, noting however, that after fiery verbal debates over integration versus assimilation, Siauw Giok Bie of the BAPERKI and Tan Hong Bok from the Catholic Party (who happened to live side by side on the same street) would play tennis games together.[39] In fact, taking the example of these two neighbours, there was little difference between the lifestyle of an integrationist and an assimilationist. They were both Dutch educated, their children were sent to Catholic or Christian schools, they played piano and loved watching the Ang Hien Hoo *wayang orang* performances. Young children of Chinese families, at school or in the dance clubs, learned various traditional dances.

From 1962 onwards, there were no more ballroom dances and Hawaiian music bands for young *peranakan* Chinese, as Soekarno banned Western '*ngak-ngik-ngok*' music, considering it to be the polluting influence of capitalist and imperialist culture. The Koes Ploes band, known as 'the Indonesian Beatles', was banned, along with tight-fitting bell-bottom pants then fashionable among teenagers. The PPU was closed (around that time) as were Western associations such as the Rotary Club. To fill the vacuum, new dance clubs with a nationalist orientation were formed, one of which was the Kuala Deli Dance Workshop founded by Colonel Soetrisno, using his house in Jalan Wilis as a studio. My three sisters and I and the Soetrisno's six children were members of this dance workshop. Apart from the *Serampang dua belas*, the Sumatran social dance popularized by Soekarno, we learned the modern social (*pergaulan*) dances, the Indonesian version of ballroom dance and new forms of Indonesian modern dance, following the trend being set by Bagong Kussudiardjo in Central Java.[40] This genre, then called *tari kreasi baru* (new creations), interpreted traditional dances and fused them with the free movement of modern ballet. The most popular dance was the *Indonesia indah* or Beautiful Indonesia dance.

39 Oei Hiem Hwie, interview, Surabaya, 19-6-2009.

40 Bagong Kussudiardjo (also spelt Kussudiardja) taught dance in Malang in 1956-1957, when he was living there while based at the Djawatan Kebudajaan office in Surabaya (Bagong Kussudiardja 1993:145).

THE THEATRE OF TRAGEDY: 1965 AND ITS AFTERMATH

The political tension that was rising in the months of 1965 at the national level was spreading to all corners of Indonesia, including the municipal city of Malang, affecting its vibrant cultural activities. A Catholic priest with a strong *totok* background, Father Wang, then the headmaster of St Joseph School (known amongst the Chinese as Hwa Ing), created an uproar when he refused to give permission for his students to be involved in a cultural event organized by the left-leaning student association, the PPI.[41] There were strong feelings amongst the anti-communist Chinese Catholics that the PPI cultural activities were 'not just *angklung* and *zangclub* (singing clubs)' (Junus H. Jahja 2009:68), but promoting communist ideology. On the other hand, for those with affiliation towards the PRC, Father Wang was seen as the agent of Kuomintang. There were many demonstrations against Father Wang and his anti-communist policies, demanding his deportation from the country.[42]

By mid-1965 there were whispered rumours that the PKI and leftist organizations had blacklisted the names of right-wing activists. Living in a close-knit neighbourhood, *peranakan* Chinese from both sides warned each other to be watchful. No one was ready, however, for the 30 September-1 October 1965 military turmoil and its bloody aftermath. In Malang, communist cleansing was carried out by both the military and civilians, unchecked, against anybody who was accused, often out of personal spite, of being communist or leftist. The highest number of casualties was in the southern part of Malang.[43] Terror spread among the Chinese communities, especially BAPERKI and the left-leaning activists. In 1965-1966, Siauw Giok Bie, then Chair of BAPERKI in East Java, was detained. Tan Hwie Liong, the most respected figure amongst the *peranakan* Chinese and patron for charity and social-cultural philanthropy, disappeared.[44] The Malang

41 Harry Tjan Silalahi also gave an account of the threats against priests and religious leaders in small cities in Central and East Java (Soedarmanta JB 2004:109). From Harry Tjan Silalahi's perspective, Father Wang from Malang was under intense terror (Silalahi, interview, 16-4-2009). According to Oei Hiem Hwie, on the other hand, it was the priest, being from Taiwan, who exercised a strong hand against PPI members, and after 1965 gave their names to the military forces (interview, Surabaya, 19-6-2009).

42 Siauw Giok Tjhan (1981) discussed similar incidents in Kalimantan, whereby a Catholic Bishop by the same name, Father Wang, challenged the effort to unite the nationalist, religious and communist forces.

43 On 31 July 1968, the Malang local parliament (DPRD Gotong Royong) – in the name of all inhabitants of Malang – issued a decree thanking the Military District Commander 0818 and his apparatus for 'repressing the remnants of G30S/PKI', especially in the southern part of Malang. The decree gave funding of 10 million *rupiah* for the 'territorial operation' (See *Himpunan Perda* 1972).

44 Stanley, interview, Jakarta, 30-7-2009.

branches of the mass media considered to have any left-leaning content were banned, including the *Terompet Masjarakat*. Oei Hiem Hwie, one of its reporters, was detained and later sent to Buru island. With communist China now seen to be supporting the 'communist rebels', Chinese speaking schools such as Ma Chung and Ta Chung were closed, their buildings confiscated and turned into military headquarters, their teachers confined in school buildings for days before being released. Dancers, singers, musicians, *wayang* shadow-puppet masters and *ludruk* and *ketoprak* players who had performed in leftist cultural activities were detained. Many disappeared without trace, including a dance trainer from the Kuala Deli Dance Workshop. The Ang Hien Hoo *wayang orang* group stopped its activities. Chinese-owned industries, including cigarette companies, which had been patrons of arts and culture for almost all organizations from the left and right, had to justify their funding policies and prove their neutrality.

Amongst Malang Chinese, there were efforts by those who survived the red cleansing to look for others who disappeared, but on the whole, it was everyone for his or her own safety, for no one was quite safe. In what was called as *apel siaga* (alert assembly), students, workers, and organizations were gathered – their names checked – to profess loyalty to Pancasila, the national ideology. It was in such an atmosphere that the Malang Chinese representatives gathered on 18 April 1966 and read the speech that stressed that 'there are no Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent who do not wish for the total unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation' and 'who do not want to work hand in hand in order to contribute all their energy and thought for their beloved country and nation Indonesia'.[45] The *apel siaga* of the Malang Chinese showed the great pressure they felt.[46] According to Junus Jahja, a minister, (unnamed), publicly

45 '[b]ahwa tidak ada seorang Indonesia keturunan Tionghoa jang tidak sungguh-sungguh ingin adanja persatuan dan kesatuan jang bulat dalam seluruh bangsa Indonesia dan bahu-membahu seluruhnya ingin sama-sama mengabdikan tenaga, pikiran dan segala-galanyja untuk kepentingan Nusa dan Bangsa Indonesia jang sangat ditjintainja.' (*Pidato ketua* 1966:1).

46 Catholic activists in Malang, most of them *peranakan* Chinese, although wary of the slaughter and detention of innocent victims, were strongly anti-communist. Assimilationist in their approach, they worked in close coordination with their national counterparts in Jakarta, such as Sindhunata from the Lembaga Persatuan dan Kesatuan Bangsa (LPKB, Institute for National Union and Unity), I.J. Kasimo (Catholic Party), Harry Tjan Silalahi and Cosmas Batubara (PMKRI) (Harry Tjan Silalahi, interview, 16-4-2009). Father Beek SJ, a Dutch Jesuit priest in Jakarta, conducted rigorous one-month training for Catholic youth to prepare them to fight communism and defend the national ideology of Pancasila. Soebianto (interview, September 2008) remembered how he accompanied Father Beek to many cities, including Malang, to brief Catholic students to join the anti-communist front with other right wing forces (HMI, PMII, Muhammadiyah Youth), which later in 1966 merged into Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (KAMI, Indonesian Student Action Union) and Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Pelajar Indonesia (KAPPI, Indonesian Youth and Student Action Union).

questioned the loyalty of the Chinese Indonesians in a huge mass rally (*rapat raksasa*) 'right after the GESTAPU (Gerakan Tigapuluh September, or the 30th September incident) in October 1965 in Jakarta' (Junus H. Jahja 2009:95).

Cultural and arts organizations headed by the Chinese people who were under detention had to do housecleaning. During the 1965 turmoil, Ang Hien Hoo was led by Siauw Giok Bie, the detained chair of BAPERKI. To save the organization, he was replaced by an acting director. In 1981 Colonel Ong Tjong Bing, a dentist who served in the army, was appointed as the new chair, and the name of the organization was changed to Yayasan Panca Budhi.[47] Other arts and cultural groups accused of leftist orientation were banned. The *Genjer-genjer* song was no longer sung, as it was considered to be GERWANI's song (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Indonesian Women's Movement, the women's organization affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party) (Soedarmata 2004:110). The 1965 turmoil had a grave impact on folk theatre, especially *ludruk*. While all LEKRA and PKI affiliated *ludruk* theatre was banned, the remaining *ludruk* groups in Malang were too afraid to perform. Only in 1967 did *ludruk* theatre reappear, under the supervision and direction of different units of the Brawijaya military regiments (Henri Supriyanto 1992:14). From 1967 onwards, party and mass organizations in Malang and the religious organizations, were doing what they termed as 'consolidation' through arts and cultural festivals. *Peranakan* Chinese dancers who joined the Kuala Deli Dance Workshop and the PMKRI or Catholic Youth arts and theatre clubs and other youth theatre and arts club from the Muslim and nationalist groups were often invited to perform in these cultural festivals. Until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Education and Culture section of the Malang Municipality sponsored such festivals and organized theatre and poetry competitions with nationalistic themes, channelling the energy left from the 1965-1966 ideological struggle amongst the political and mass organizations.

By 1972, however, when the New Order Government under Soeharto ordered the fusion of mass organizations and political parties, the cultural life and expression of mass and political organizations in Malang had dwindled. This was the beginning of the New Order cultural politics. J.A. Nurtjahjo, a Catholic activist of 1960s, suggests three reasons for the decline of cultural activities in Malang in general.[48] First was 'the loss of a strong ideological opposition to

47 Ang Hien Hoo, Focus Group Discussion, Malang, 11-10-2008.

48 J.A. Nurtjahjo, interview, Malang, 2-8-2009.

compete with'. With the leftist cultural groups out of the scene, the drive to fight was gone. Second, was the decline of financial support from Malang businesses and industries, which, traumatized by the penalty they got for sponsoring the wrong camp, were no longer keen on cultural philanthropy. Third, the fusion of political parties had robbed smaller organizations, which used to have their own arts sections, of their mechanisms for mobilizing arts and cultural activities. Together, these factors worked to depoliticize the arts and cultural scene in Malang, especially among the Chinese.

CONCLUSION: THE DYING BREED?

The cultural activism of the Malang Chinese from the AMT generation in late 1947 to the late 1960s reflects the dynamics of minority citizens embroiled in the nation building process. Shaped by the larger forces that surrounded them – the legacy of Dutch colonial policy and Japanese Occupation, the Indonesian independence revolution and the repercussions of Indonesia's own 1965 'Cold War' – the Malang Chinese, through their cultural politics, emerged as agents who actively negotiated, engaged and in a way also shaped those very forces.

In terms of nationalism and the cultural assimilation of the *peranakan* Chinese, the cultural history of the Malang Chinese might not be too different from those of other cities in Java, such as Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Semarang or Surabaya. What comes to the surface in the Malang context is not so much the degree of cultural assimilation, but the intensity of the cultural politics of the Chinese, closeknit within the small public sphere of the Malang environment, and at the same time vibrantly diverse and full of contestation. As a residential and resort area, Malang had served as an escape and at the same time nursing bed for many Chinese of neighbouring areas to nurture their cultural, artistic and political aspirations. The influence of the older generation of politically active Chinese intellectuals, such as Siauw Giok Tjan and Go Gien Tjwan, was significant in setting the cultural climate. Compared to Surabaya as a bustling port city, Semarang with its long history of the Chinese trading communities, or Solo or Yogyakarta with their strong Javanese *kraton* (palace) aura, Malang, which was named a municipality only in 1914, had a legacy as a Dutch residential town. Known as a favourite place for Chinese families from the surrounding areas in East Java to send their children for primary and secondary education in the Christian schools inherited from the Dutch, Malang

served as a 'transit' city for Chinese intellectuals and cultural and political activists, who were at home in the modernist and hybrid mix of the Malay-Dutch-Chinese-Javanese milieu. In the words of one AMT crash course alumni: 'Compared to Surabaya, Semarang, Yogyakarta and Surakarta, Malang was a young city. The society was as young as the city. The older generation in Malang had mostly graduated from MULO and spoke Dutch. The younger generation was considered to be modern.'[49]

The quote below from the bi-weekly magazine *Liberty* (published in Malang from 1946), explaining the symbol of the dove on its cover, captures the modernist attitude of the majority of Chinese transiting in Malang:

> Real freedom gives mental freedom, which means freedom from all kinds of ties or bondage. Examples of mental bondage are arrogance, snobbism, chauvinism, religious fanaticism, and fanaticism in clinging to tradition, all of which hamper individuals from being free.[50]

One question remains, whether this plural culture, fluid and easily adapting to the new surroundings, was transient. The colonial legacy amongst the Dutch educated Malang *peranakan* Chinese was expressed in the fluid mix of the 'jolly 50s', which gave way to the Soekarnoist era of the nationalist modernist culture of the 1960s. Not covered in this paper, but implied from the career path of the AMT crash course alumni, was the cultural absorption of the Malang *peranakan* Chinese into the New Order depoliticizing cultural politics, which banned any trace of Chinese-ness. When the Reformasi age began in 1998, what emerged in Malang as well as in other places in Indonesia was the celebration of Chinese-ness which was far removed from the hybrid cultural expression produced in the complicated historical process. With the rise of China as a global economic force and the rising enterprise of Chinese businesses with stronger cultural orientation towards the mother land, what appeared in the public space in many urban centres in Indonesia, was stereotypical representations of Chinese culture,

49 'Kota Malang itu relatif kota muda, kalau dibandingkan dengan Surabaya, Semarang, Yogyakarta…Karena kotanya muda, masyarakatnya juga muda. Angkatan tua di Malang rata-rata lulusan MULO, berbahasa Belanda. Anak-anak Malang di kenal modern'. (From the AMT Crash Course Alumni FGD, Jakarta 21-2-2009).

50 'Merdeka sedjati berikan djoega kemerdekaan bathin, djadi bebas dari segala matjam ikatan tau kekangan. Ikatan bathin adalah beroepa penjakit temahe, gila hormat, chauvinism, koekoeh igama, koekoeh traditie jang semoeanja menghalangi manusia hidoep merdeka'. (*Liberty* 167, 15-2-1946).

such as the replica of the Great Wall. With the BAPERKI political activists erased, and the *peranakan* Chinese New Order assimilationist intellectuals retreating, will the Malang Chinese and their mixed culture become 'the dying breed', a relic for the Malang *Tempo Doeloe* annual celebration?[51]

The celebration of the stereotypical Chinese-ness, however, as many have argued, might not be the only cultural path to the future (Tan 2008). Amongst the younger generation coming out of Malang are leading Indonesian intellectual and cultural workers who combine modernity with local touch in hybrid forms.[52] A number of young intellectuals who passed through Malang, such as the late Mingki Hadi Soesastro, Ariel Heryanto, Stanley Adi Prasetyo, and Esther Indahyani, engaged critically with the economic, social and political structures and moved beyond the borders of fixed cultural identities.[53] In the meantime, small people worked quietly to continue the cross cultural legacy. In one corner in Malang, a mother in charge of the *wayang orang* section of the Pancabudhi Foundation (then Ang Hien Hoo), gathered all resources to revive the *wayang orang* tradition among the younger generation.[54] New creative expressions continue to be displayed. In a play called *The birth of Setyaki* staged for one of the Malang *Tempoe Doeloe* festivals, the tiger who was supposed to devour the protagonist Setyaki was replaced by a *barongsai* player from the Eng An Kong temple.[55] There are strong indications that Malang, as a microcosm of Indonesia, will remain a site for complex, plural cultural expression of the Chinese as Indonesian citizens. A new chapter is yet to be written.

51 From the words of one AMT crash course alumni, FGD, 21-2-2009: 'We – the generation who could speak Dutch and experienced the colonial, revolution, independence and the reformation – we are a dying breed'.

52 While the renowned architect, Han Awal, belonged to the AMT generation, amongst the younger generation of Malang Chinese architects are Budiman Hendro Purnomo (Tugu Hotel, Malang and the central library of the University of Indonesia), and Hidayat Endromukti (Griya Cakra Hotel, Malang). In the field of music there is conductor Paul Imam Zacharia, who promotes interfaith dialogue.

53 The late Mingki Hadi Soesastro, who became one of the leading CSIS political economists during the New Order, was the son of Tan Sien Giok, the director of the Paragon Press and one of the editors of the *Liberty* magazine when it was published in Malang. Ariel Heryanto, proponent of contextual literature in the literary debate of 1970s, is now Assistant Professor at the Australian National University, Canberra; Stanley Adi Prasetyo is a writer and human rights activist. Esther Indahyani is an awardee of the Yap Thiam Hien award for her human rights advocacy in fighting for the May 1998 victims.

54 Now only a small percentage of the *wayang orang* players are Chinese, mostly the children and grandchildren of the previous Ang Hien Hoo fans and players (Sinta Dewi, interview, Malang, 10-07-2010).

55 Ong Tjong Bing, interview, Malang, 9-7-2010.

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11

In search of an Indonesian Islamic cultural identity, 1956-1965

Choirotun Chisaan

The emergence of Islamic art and culture organizations is an important aspect of Indonesian cultural history between 1950 and 1965.[1] These organizations were part of an unprecedented rise in Islamic cultural consciousness in Indonesia at this time, which also produced new genres of Islamic-inspired literature (*sastra keagamaan*) (Goenawan Mohamad 1969:88) and film (Misbach Yusa Biran 1990:37).

In Goenawan Mohamad's view, there were two factors behind the emergence of this new genre of Islamic literature. The first was a search for identity on the part of Indonesian Islamic writers, and the second was the influence of the political climate of the time (Goenawan Mohamad 1969:89; Kratz 1986:60). Heightened political tensions produced a trend towards factionalism and competition between social groups and organizations, and this meant that the literature of this period was significantly different from that produced by Islamic writers from earlier periods, such as the 1930s novels by the prominent Islamic writer Hamka, who Hairus Salim discusses in his contribution to this volume. In the 1950-1965 period, these two factors identified by Goenawan Mohamad dominated almost all of Indonesian artistic and cultural life, especially that concerned with the expression of an Islamic cultural consciousness.

The unprecedented nature of these developments gave rise to an ongoing debate on the issue of the authenticity of 'Islamic' art and culture in Indonesia. It attracted contributions from scholars based in various Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN, State Islamic Institutes), both those educated in the Middle East and those educated locally, as well as Islamic scholars from other tertiary institu-

1 Thanks for Jennifer Lindsay for sharing with me information and articles about Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI, Association for Islamic Arts and Culture).

tions, *ulama* (Islamic theologians) and artists, who, as Rusjdi (1965) noted, often recoiled from Koranic verses being recited, probably because it seemed as though art could be justified only in religious terms. This debate reached its high point in 1965, when the first Africa-Asia Islamic Conference (KIAA, Konferensi Islam Afrika-Asia) was staged in Bandung, the same city that had hosted the famous 'Asian-African Conference' of 1955.

The activity surrounding Indonesian Islamic art and culture during the 1950-1965 period led to the formation of two important cultural organizations based on Indonesian interpretations of Islamic thought and practice. These were the Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI, Association for Islamic Arts and Culture), formed in 1956, and Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia (LESBUMI, Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures), formed in 1962. HSBI described itself initially as an independent organization, but it was close to the modernist Islamic party MASJUMI (Madjelis Sjura Muslimin Indonesia, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims), which was banned by President Soekarno in 1960 (Sidi Gazalba 1977:73). Later, it declared itself to be an organ of the Department of Religion (Departemen Agama).[2] On the other hand, LESBUMI was officially part of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the party of traditionalist Indonesian Muslims that was founded in East Java in 1926.

In this essay, my main focus will be on HSBI, as an extension to my previous research on LESBUMI (Choirotun Chisaan 2008). My concern is not so much with the history of the organization as with the role it played in giving birth to Islamic-based genres of the Indonesian arts and channelling the search for an Islamic identity in Indonesian cultural life during the period under discussion. I will also attempt to describe the organization's role in the cultural politics of this period. However a focus on HSBI does not mean that LESBUMI can be completely disregarded. The two organizations were closely related, and in a political climate characterized by cultural offensives and intense rivalry originating from the growing strength of the Left, they also depended on each other for mutual support and material assistance (Sidi Gazalba 1977:73; Misbach Yusa Biran 2008:162). In this respect, HSBI relied strongly on LESBUMI, because as an organization without the support of a mass base or a particular political party (Misbach Yusa Biran

2 Usmar Ismail 1966. The association with the Department of Religion is consistent with the fact that a number of the organization's founders, such as K.H. Saleh Suaidi, Abdullah Aidid and M. Nur Alian, were employees of the Division of Information on Religion (DJAPENA, Djawatan Penerangan Agama), which was part of the Department's infrastructure.

2008:145), it depended on the backing that LESBUMI enjoyed through its affiliation with NU. This was not only the case for HSBI, but for all Muslim artists and activists in the cultural field who did not have party political affiliations (Misbach Yusa Biran 2008:162; Goenawan Mohamad 1988:10-1).

LESBUMI's NU connections also meant that it was more widely represented in national bodies set up according to the principles of NASAKOM, Soekarno's ideological formulation that called for a united front of nationalist, religious and communist elements in Indonesian political life. As the guiding principle was 'religion', Islamic organizations with differing approaches found themselves coming together in political alliances that overrode the differences between them. As Misbach Yusa Biran (2008:162) commented, in this climate, 'there was no longer the slightest difference felt between representatives of LESBUMI, representatives of Muhammadiyah, or representatives of al-Wasliah'.[3] The interests of all Islamic organizations were intimately intertwined, which makes it impossible to discuss the activities of HSBI at this time without also making reference to LESBUMI in various connections.

INDONESIAN ISLAM AS A CITIZEN OF ASIA-AFRICA ISLAM

In January 1966, translations originally commissioned by President Soekarno in early 1965 of two books appeared on the shelves of Indonesian bookstores. They were Indonesian renditions of two classic studies of Islam by Lothrop Stoddard (1883-1950), *The new world of Islam* (*Dunia baru Islam*) and *The rising tide of color* (*Pasang naik kulit berwarna*).[4] As Soekarno remarked in his preface to the

3 'Sedikit pun tidak terasa lagi ada perbedaan antara wakil Lesbumi, wakil Muhammadiyah, wakil al-Wasliah'. Al-Wasliah – also spelt Al-Washliyah, was a religious organization similar in ideology to Nahdlatul Ulama, and based in Medan, North Sumatra.

4 Responsibility for the translations was assigned to the Coordinating Minister for Welfare, Lieutenant-General H.M. Muljadi Djojomartono, who established a publishing committee made up of Prof Dra. Tudjimah, Ismail Jacub, Drs. Sidi Gazalba and Nj. Rochmuljati Hamzah. The translations were based on the original English texts, as well as existing translations into Arabic to assist the committee in its determination of appropriate Islamic terminology. Editorial corrections were undertaken by Drs. Gazali Dunia. Material for supplementary chapters was compiled by Abubakar Atjeh, with suggestions from Prof Dr H. Roeslan Abdulgani, Coordinating Minister for Communication with the People. In its introduction to *The new world of Islam*, the publishing committee noted that the book had been 'quite warmly received', especially in Islamic circles. Its Arabic translation had become a textbook in Islamic schools and universities right across the Islamic world' (see Stoddard 1966a:5-6).

Indonesian translations, the two books were already well known in the West. First published in the 1920s, they described the rise of nations of coloured people in Africa-Asia before the outbreak of the Second World War.

The new world of Islam (1921) was particularly concerned with rise of Islam in the countries of the Africa-Asia region. Stoddard suggested that the Islamic resurgence in this region was tied to the influence of the Western model of progress, and recorded also the impact of the reformist spirit initiated by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1787) in Arabia. The purification zeal of the Wahabiyah Movement reached its high point after it came into contact with the political ideals of modern Pan-Islamism and its aspirations towards Muslim solidarity on an international level.

'Islam's solidarity', Stoddard wrote, 'is powerfully buttressed by two of its fundamental institutions: the "Hajj", or pilgrimage to Mecca, and the caliphate.' (Stoddard 1921:38, 1966a:47). The former was particularly important for links between Muslims, and forged the connection between Indonesia and other Islamic nations. However from the middle of the nineteenth century, Pan-Islamism was responsible for a more modern and organized form of Muslim solidarity, based on new Islamic fraternities such as the Sanusi order that spread rapidly across North Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century, and new proselytizing movements such as those led by political activist and acknowledged founder of Islamic modernity Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838-1897) (better known as Sayyid Jamāl-al-dīn al-Afghānī), and Syaikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Egyptian jurist, religious scholar and liberal reformer, also considered founder of Islamic Modernism, who was head of Al-Azhar university in Cairo (Stoddard 1921:52-4, 148; 1966a:52, 153).

Along with the political ideology of Pan-Islamism, this period also saw the rise of Western-style nationalism, which also spread to the non-Western world and resulted in the emergence of movements like 'Young Turkey' and 'Young Egypt'. In the early twentieth century, both these developments came into contact with Russian Bolshevism, with its specific aims, according to Stoddard (1966a:52), of igniting world revolution and destroying Western civilization. In *The new world of Islam*, Stoddard describes the impact of these developments in detail, but Indonesia is mentioned only in passing. Soekarno, in his 1966 introduction to the Stoddard translations, described Stoddard's treatment of Indonesia as 'lightweight' (*tjangkingan*), which he attributed to the historical role of imperialism in closing the doors on Indonesia and leaving it unknown in the rest of the world. This, he said, was despite the fact

that the situation in Indonesia at the time Stoddard was writing was strongly influenced by developments in the rest of the Africa-Asia region. Soekarno's own essays, 'Nasionalisme, Islamisme, Marxisme' from 1926 and 'Indonesianisme dan Pan-Asianisme' of 1928,[5] reflect the influence of these upheavals in the Indonesian context. Soekarno's two essays were spurred by Stoddard's predictions, although unlike Stoddard (1921:273-99; 1966a:268-93), who warned against the dangers that Bolshevism posed to both the West and the East, Soekarno welcomed the combination of the three ideological streams of nationalism, Islamism and Marxism as the basis for an effective weapon against neo-colonialism and imperialism.

It was the 'lightweight' reference to Indonesia in Stoddard's book that made Soekarno recommend the addition of a supplementary chapter to the Indonesian translation of *The new world of Islam*, which was entitled 'Kebangkitan dunia baru Islam di Indonesia' ('The rise of the new world of Islam in Indonesia'). Considering that the translation was commissioned in 1965, it is clear that this additional chapter was intended to confirm Indonesia's place among the nations of the Africa-Asia region, and to imply that following the rise of Islam in Turkey, Egypt, Palestine and India between 1934 and 1964, Indonesia had also given birth to a revival and renaissance of Islam (Rosihan Anwar 1964:4). At the same time, the chapter was also an expression of Soekarno's optimism about the rise of Islam as one of the three frameworks of the Indonesian revolution and especially the struggle of Indonesian Muslims 'who were enthusiastically carrying out the command of the Head of State to delve into the fire of Islam, to understand this spirit in the struggle of the Islamic umma in all corners of the world'.[6]

The incorporation of Indonesia into 'the new world of Islam', which the translation of Stoddard's work was intended to confirm, can be seen as part of what Soekarno termed 'Indonesia's victories in foreign affairs' ('*kemenangan-kemenangan Indonesia jang bersangkut-paut dengan luar negeri*') (Sukarno 1965:574). More accurately, these 'victories in foreign affairs' referred to Indonesian achievements in 'Asia-Africa' affairs; events such as the Ministerial Meeting of Africa and Asia II (MMAA), the Konferensi Wartawan Asia-Afrika (KWAA, Conference of Asian and African Journalists), the

5 See Sukarno 1964:1-23, 73-7.

6 '[j]ang sedang hangat-hangatnja melaksanakan Komando Kepala Negara untuk menggali apinja Islam, memahami api perdjuangan ummat Islam di seluruh penjuru dunia'. See 'Pengantar kata panitia penerbit' ('Publishing committee's introduction') in Stoddard 1966a:3.

executive session of the Konferensi Pengarang Asia-Afrika (KPAA, Asia-Africa Writers' Conference) and the Festival Film Asia-Afrika (FFAA, Asia-Africa Film Festival). These 'victories' were all Indonesian government initiatives designed to foster Asia-Africa solidarity and a mobilization of the 'New Emerging Forces' (Sukarno 1965:574). The commission of the translation of Stoddard's book was planned to coincide with the staging of the first Konferensi Islam Afrika-Asia (KIAA, Africa-Asia Islamic Conference) in March 1965, confirming Indonesia's place as a centre of Islamic revival and renaissance equal to the existing examples of Turkey, Egypt, Palestine and India.

AFRICA-ASIA ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

A total of 107 delegates from 33 countries and eight observers from four additional countries were present at the opening of the Africa-Asia Islamic Conference in Bandung on 6 March 1965. As the host nation, Indonesia sent 40 delegates and 21 advisers, representing the full spectrum of the Islamic community in Indonesia at the time.[7] The Indonesian organizing committee consisted of K.H. Idham Chalid and H.A. Sjaichu (NU), Arudji Kartawinata and Harsono Tjokroaminoto (Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia, PSII, Indonesian Islamic Union Party), K.H. Siradjuddin Abbas (Pergerakan Tarbijah Islamijah, PERTI, Islamic Education Movement), K.H.A. Badawi and Prof K.H. Farid Ma'ruf (Muhammadiyah), Wartomo and Agus Sadono (Gabungan Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia, GASBIINDO, Indonesian Association of Islamic Labour Unions) and H. Zainuddin Dja'far (Al-Washliyah). Assistance was also received from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Army (Saifuddin Zuhri 1981:654). Originally the conference was scheduled to take place on 17 December 1964/13 Sya'ban 1384, but as this date fell in the lead up to the (fasting) month of Ramadhan, the program was postponed until March 1965. The timing of the official program according to the *hijrah* calendar was an indication of the conference's significance for the Islamic community, even though it was also an international event.

7 The countries sending delegations were Algeria, Angola, Cambodia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Dahomy, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, North Borneo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, the Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, the People's Republic of China, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), the Soviet Union, Yemen and Indonesia. Eight observers represented Afghanistan, Australia, West Germany and Malaysia. See Saifuddin Zuhri 1981:654-5.

KONPERENSI ISLAM AFRIKA - ASIA

mendjebol oldefos dengan segala manifestasinja

(*Gema Islam* 3-65 (1 January 1965):6)

One year previously, in June 1964, a preliminary planning conference was held in Jakarta. It was attended by 13 countries as sponsors of the forthcoming main event, including Thailand, Pakistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Republic, Tunisia and Morocco. The resolutions of this preliminary conference were described as embodying the 'common resolve of the Africa-Asia Islamic umma to form an Africa-Asia Islamic Organization'.[8] The announcement of the forthcoming conference in the journal *Gema Islam* noted that this organization would function as 'a forum for the common struggle to unite our forces in order to achieve prosperity and justice under the blessing of Almighty God'.[9] The preliminary conference also determined the political concepts that were intended to lay down the guiding principles of the main event, stating that 'the basis and aims of the KIAA are to intensify solidarity and cooperation among the umma in the Africa-Asia region in concrete and positive form and in accordance with the spirit of the Ten Bandung Principles'.[10] Additionally, the conference would aim to discuss 'matters concerned with Islamic Proselytizing (*Dakwah*), Education (*Tarbijah*) and culture (*tsaqofah*)'.[11]

The organization of the KIAA itself, according to Saifuddin Zuhri (1981:654), was an initiative of Nahdlatul Ulama, and designed to counter the monopoly over the formation of international movements which hitherto had been exercised by the communists. If Zuhri is correct, then the organization of the con-

8 '[t]ekat bersama antara ummat Islam Afrika-Asia untuk membentuk Organisasi Islami Afrika-Asia'. See 'Konperensi Islam Afrika Asia di Bandung awal Maret 1965', *Gema Islam* 4-68 (15 February 1965):5.

9 '[w]adah perdjuangan bersama menjatu-padukan kekuatan guna mentjapai kemakmuran dan keadilan jang diridhoi Allah Jang Maha Kuasa'. See 'Konperensi Islam Afrika Asia di Bandung awal Maret 1965', *Gema Islam* 4-68 (15 February 1965):5.

10 '[d]asar dan tudjuan KIAA ialah memperhebat kerdjasama dan solidaritas diantara ummat Islam di negara Afrika-Asia dalam bentuk jang konkrit dan positif, sesuai dengan semangat Dasa Sila Bandung' (Rosihan Anwar 1964:4).

11 '[m]embahas soal2 jang bertalian dengan Da'wah, Tarbijah dan tsaqofah Islamijah' (Rosihan Anwar 1964:4).

ference should be seen as a manifestation of the intense political rivalry being played out in Indonesia at the time, rather than as an expression of NASAKOM-type 'unity'. In other words, the KIAA was a manifestation of Islamic 'irritation' at the communist domination of foreign policy in relation to the Asia-Africa region. To counter this perceived 'PKI/communist domination', the conference was intended to show that Asia-Africa solidarity and the mobilization of the New Emerging Forces could be fostered on a different basis, that of Islam. It was a political event that would promote Soekarno's thinking about the importance of Asia-Africa unity and solidarity in the fight against imperialism and colonialism, as much as it was a forum for 'cooperation' between Muslim peoples in the Asia-Africa region. The imperialists, Soekarno declared, were in the process assembling an international force to destroy Asia-Africa. This had to be resisted by the peoples of Asia-Africa acting together to avoid the threat of imperialist and colonialist domination.[12] The question remained, however, as to whether other countries in the Asia-Africa region shared Indonesia's commitment to a NASAKOM-type united front as the way forward in this struggle.

Even though the organization of the conference can be seen as motivated by political interests and ideology, the statement that its guiding principles included the discussion of matters concerned with 'Islamic proselytizing, education and culture' indicates that religious concerns were central to its intended agenda. The resolutions of the preliminary session incorporated a number of non-political items for the agenda of the main conference, among them cooperation among Islamic peoples to strengthen Africa-Asia solidarity in accordance with Islamic teachings; overall coordination of the undertakings of Islamic peoples in the Africa-Asia region in the fields of religion, economics, social affairs, culture and other matters; the formation of an Islamic information bureau; initiatives to estab-

(*Gema Islam* 3-51 (1 Juni 1964):10)

12 'Presiden Sukarno djelaskan makna revolusi Indonesia dan Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa Pantjasila', *Gema Islam* 4-70 (15 March 1965):6-7.

lish exchange programs in the cultural field; the establishment of an international scholarship program; fellowships and other undertakings to develop Islamic studies in the countries of the Africa-Asia region; a strengthening of the activities of Islamic missions through joint undertakings; the formation of a permanent cooperative body along Islamic principles for the umma of the Africa-Asia region; and the formation of particular organizations for a youth movement, a women's movement and community-oriented undertakings.[13] For this reason, the Indonesian delegation to the KIAA involved prominent figures drawn from the field of culture and the intelligentsia. Their role was to represent Indonesian interests in discussions of issues concerning the politics of Muslim culture in the wider world, and in the Africa-Asia region in particular.

A DEMONSTRATION OF THE STRENGTH OF THE 'A' COMPONENT OF NAS-A-KOM

For Indonesian Islamic artists and cultural figures, the KIAA was an event of major significance. It was an opportunity for a high-profile show of strength by Islamic figures in the arts, and the united front presented by various streams of Indonesian Islam coming together in the conference organizing committee highlighted the combined strength of the 'A', or 'Religious', component of the NASAKOM ideology. This assertion of the role of Islamic organizations had begun to emerge clearly in April 1964 when Indonesia hosted the Third Asia-Africa Film Festival. President Soekarno gave his blessing to the organization of the festival, and appointed Nj. Utami Surjadarma as head of the national committee charged with its implementation.

The Third Asia-Africa Film Festival (FFAA III) in Jakarta was a continuation of the first festival held in Tashkent in 1958 and the second festival in Cairo in 1960. From the outset, the Third Asia-Africa Film Festival of 1964 was dogged by accusations that it was dominated by the 'KOM', or communist faction, through control of the organizing committee by LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat, Institute of People's Culture) (Rosihan Anwar 1964:4-5; 2006:273-4, 301). Usmar Ismail, speaking as a representative of the Union of Indonesian Film Companies (PPFI, Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia), declared that the communists had failed to involve representatives of this government-recognized association

13 'Serba-Serbi KIAA', *Gema Islam* 3-53 (1 July 1964):8.

in the organization of the conference. In reply, Sitor Situmorang, the head of the Soekarnoist-oriented Institute of National Culture (LKN, Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional) who was active in the organization of the festival, declared that Usmar's objections were no more than an attempt to keep from public knowledge his permissive attitude towards the pernicious effects of films originating from the world of the 'Old Established Forces' (OLDEFO) on the peoples of the Africa-Asia region (Rosihan Anwar 2006:273-4). Rosihan Anwar suggests that despite all the bluster at the time, the festival failed to make much of an impact on the cultural life of the capital:

> Despite the promotional material surrounding the festival – cinemas only showed films from the festival program – the overall atmosphere was very sedate. I was surprised that the communists made no effort to mobilize their mass organizations to flood into the cinemas showing films from the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam and elsewhere. Was it because the people could not be forced to swallow such overly propagandistic films? The fact was that the cinemas showing the festival films were quiet and empty. Even so, the Antara news agency reported that there was a 'gratifying level of interest from the viewing public'.[14]

By June of the same year (1964), perhaps with glee that the Asia Africa Film Festival had not been a huge success for the 'KOM' group that had dominated its organization, a sense of excitement was growing about the KIAA conference that was still a year away. Various streams of Islam came together with a sense of one voice, to take part in the planning for the event.

Even though the KIAA was an initiative of Nahdlatul Ulama, the organization of the conference was reported with great enthusiasm in *Gema Islam*, the magazine published by former MASJUMI party activists and sympathizers which was the voice of HSBI.[15] The tone of the magazine's response to the conference was expressed in a poem by Zulkabir, published in *Gema Islam* in June 1964 to coincide with the preparatory meeting:

14 'Kendati gambar-gambar yang menyertai festival – di bioskop hanya diputar film-film dari festival – namun pada umumnya suasana adem ayem belaka. Saya heran juga kaum komunis tidak mengerahkan organisasi massa (ormas) mereka untuk membanjiri bioskop yang memutar film RRT, Uni Soviet, Vietnam Utara dan lain-lain. Apakah karena rakyat tidak dapat dipaksa menelan begitu saja film-film itu yang keterlaluan sekali propagandanya? Kenyataan ialah bioskop-bioskop yang memutar film festival kosong sepi belaka. Toh 'Antara' menyiarkan 'kunjungan penonton memuaskan adanya.' (Rosihan Anwar 2006:301.)

15 See the contribution by Hairus Salim to this volume.

K.I.A.A.
(Hormatku jang sangat pada P.J.M. Hadji Dr Ir Sukarno)

Pertemuan itu mesra sekali dalam kesamaan tjita
dalam pernjataan suara hakiki dalam lantunannja
di-padang2 luas bakaran matahari ~ dulu lamasekali
setelah mendjalani malamhitam atau nganganja detak djantung
atau tjerita2 pernahnja ia djadi suluh dan terbakar sendiri.

Sekarang ia menetapi wudjud kehadirannja
membenarkan djandji jang pernah diberikan ~ pembebas
dari orang2 jang ingin ambil hak Allah ~ penguasa alam.
Akan dikukuhkan kesetiakawanan antara sesama
sebab itu njawanja sebab untuk itu ia dilahirkan.
Dengan itu penguasaan orang atas orang bangsa atas bangsa
dihantjurkan.
Dengan itu ia berikan sumbangannja pada kemanusiaan sedjagat
jang telah disakitkan dihirubirukan.

Pertemuan sesama saudara ini akan mesra sekali
tapi ia penuh dinamika ia mesiu2 jang siap diledakkan
menghanguskan mendjadikan keping2 takberharga itu kezaliman.
Karena memang Islam itu revolusioner
dan sudah sempurna untuk setiap zaman.
(di Indonesia kami telah memanifestasikannja
dalam dasar negara kami Pantja Sila)

Bandung, 1 djuni 1964[16]

The Africa-Asia Islamic Conference
(With great respect for H.E. Haji Dr Ir Sukarno)

A gathering full of the warmth of shared ideals,
of the expression of the inner truth that rang out
across the hot desert plains – for ages long
after it underwent the darkness of night or a gaping heartbeat
or the stories of a time when it shone like a torch consumed by its
own fire.

Now it gives expression to its presence
fulfilling the promise once made – the liberator
from those who would assume the rights of Allah – controller of
nature.
Solidarity between brothers will be affirmed
for that it exists, for that it was created.

16 *Gema Islam* 3-52 (15 June 1964):27.

Through it the power of people over people, nations over nations,
will all be destroyed.
Through it a suffering and confused humanity
will be granted a boon.

This gathering of brothers will be full of warmth
but it will also be full of a dynamism set to explode,
blowing tyranny into worthless pieces.
Because Islam is indeed revolutionary
and perfectly formed for every age.
(in Indonesia we have manifested its truth
in our state principles of Panca Sila)

Bandung, 1 June 1964

Coverage of the KIAA in *Gema Islam* lasted from the time planning was begun in March 1964 until after the staging of the conference in March 1965. News of preparations for the event included a report of a goodwill mission by the conference organizing committee to a number of sponsoring countries in March-May 1964. It was led by K.H.A. Sjaichu from NU, and was carried out in conjunction with the performance of the *haj*. Reports of cultural discussion meetings held in Cipayung in preparation for the conference and a variety of comments and expressions of hope for the conference were also part of *Gema Islam*'s coverage. When the event itself took place, the magazine published comprehensive reports of the proceedings, events taking place outside the official conference, as well as its outcomes, all under a column entitled '*serba-serbi KIAA*' ('in and around the KIAA').

The holding of the KIAA was judged to be a rewarding and successful event. It began with a message (*amanat*) from the President of the Republic of Indonesia, and after the passage of a number of sessions it concluded with a declaration and a set of resolutions relating to cooperation among the umma throughout the world in matters of politics, economics, culture, social affairs, education, proselytizing, international cooperation, world peace and the fate of Muslims in non-Muslim countries. It also issued a series of resolutions concerning the struggle of the Palestinian people and peoples elsewhere who were fighting for national independence (Saifuddin Zuhri 1981:655).

KIAA; THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL AGENDA

As mentioned above, cultural matters figured alongside political issues on the agenda of the KIAA. Specifically, the conference

aimed to discuss: 1) developing an Africa-Asia people's culture that did not conflict with Islamic teachings; 2) establishing cultural exchange programs between the Islamic peoples of the Africa-Asia region with a view to strengthening cooperation and Islamic brotherhood; 3) intensifying the application of Islamic teachings and developing a good quality Qur'anic recitation (*qiraah*) among the peoples of Africa-Asia; 4) encouraging the development of Islamic libraries; 5) promoting the use of spoken Arabic as a language of unity among the umma, alongside the national language of each country; and 6) working towards the establishment of Islamic cultural centres, at both the national and international levels.[17]

In the Indonesian context of the time, questions related to Islamic art and culture could not be separated from political issues, as the KIAA clearly illustrated. The cultural agenda of the conference brought together the full range of Islamic cultural organizations active at the time, working together to contribute to the cultural program and ensure the success of the conference. Apart from HSBI and LESBUMI, the organizations involved were Lembaga Kesenian Islam (LEKSI, Institute of Islamic Arts) which was affiliated with PERTI; Lembaga Kebudajaan Sjarikat Muslimin Indonesia (LAKSMI, Cultural Institute of the Union of Indonesian Muslims) affiliated with PSII; Ikatan Seniman dan Budajawan Muhammadijah (ISBM, Muhammadiyah League of Artists and Cultural Figures) and Ikatan Sardjana Muslim Indonesia (ISMI, League of Indonesian Muslim Graduates). Liaison between these organizations was facilitated in a body named Badan Musjawarah Kebudajaan Islam (BMKI, Council for Deliberations on Islamic Culture), which had been founded in 1963 (Amura 1966:8). Apart from its cultural orientation, this organization was also more overtly political in nature, because its membership comprised both more independent cultural organizations such as HSBI and those clearly affiliated to political parties.

The 1965 KIAA was a demonstration of Muslim unity, both national and international, a unity expressed in political and cultural terms. But it was a unity forged in the particular political situation of Indonesia in 1965, and had come about as the culmination of various organizational alliances in the positioning of Islam in the cultural life of the nation, from the early 1950s to the formation of HSBI in 1956, through to the more militant positioning against the Left of the early 1960s. It is to a discussion of that positioning, moving backwards from the endpoint of the KIAA, that this essay now turns.

17 'Working-paper KIAA; Bidang pendidikan/research, da'wah/missi, penerangan dan kebudajaan (diajukan oleh delegasi Indonesia)', *Gema Islam* 4-72 (15 April 1965):19-20.

HSBI: ALLYING WITH LESBUMI TO OPPOSE LEKRA

> HSBI belongs to all Muslims, to NU, PSII, PERTI, Muhammadijah, Washlijah and the entire umma. As an organization founded on Religion, HSBI is ready to be a tool in the hands of the Department of Religion, and the Islamic Spiritual Centres of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police. Furthermore, as an organization of members of a functional group, HSBI as a member of the National Front is ready to take on its duties to the State and the Nation in realizing the ideals of the Indonesian Revolution.[18]

On 12 August 1964, in his capacity as executive head of LESBUMI, Usmar Ismail was asked to give a public lecture on cultural affairs to an association of employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Apart from LESBUMI, the association had also issued invitations to two other cultural organizations, LKN and LEKRA. Representing LKN was the organization's Secretary-General, Bagin, while LEKRA was represented by Bachtiar Siagian (Masri S. 1964). Usmar Ismail was unable to attend on the day of the meeting, and the written text of his talk (Usmar Ismail 1964a) was delivered by Naziruddin Naib, director of LESBUMI and head of the distribution office of the National Film Company (Perfini, Perusahaan Film Nasional Indonesia) (Misbach Yusa Biran 2008:93).

In the talk delivered by Naziruddin Naib, Usmar Ismail explained the rationale for LESBUMI's existence alongside other cultural organizations of the time, and described his organization's cultural outlooks. He suggested that as a cultural phenomenon, LESBUMI was similar to LKN and LEKRA, in that they were all mass cultural organizations affiliated to political parties of the time. In LESBUMI's case, its basis was the Pancasila and its guiding principle was Soekarno's Political Manifesto, or MANIPOL. As a cultural organization under the aegis of Nahdlatul Ulama, its foundation was Islamic identity.[19]

18 HSBI adalah milik kaum Muslimin, milik NU, milik PSII, milik PERTI, milik Muhammadijah, milik Washlijah dan semua organisasi Islam serta ummatnja. Dan sebagai organisasi Agama maka HSBI adalah siap mendjadi alat Departemen Agama, PUSROH ISLAM baik AD, AL, AU dan Angkatan Kepolisiannja. Dan selaku satu organisasi Karyawan HSBI sebagai anggauta Front Nasional siap memundak segala tugasnja untuk Negara dan Bangsa dalam mensukseskan tjita2 Revolusi Indonesia. (Junan Helmy Nasution 1963:21.) Note that Junan is also often written as Yunan.

19 Choirotun Chisaan 2008. Usmar's statement that 'as a cultural phenomenon, LESBUMI was similar to LKN and LEKRA' ('*fenomena kehadiran Lesbumi tidak berbeda jauh dengan kehadiran LKN dan Lekra*') must be seen in the context of the early 1960s, after the launch of MANIPOL-USDEK. At that time, LEKRA had adopted a highly political stance. Even if the existence of LESBUMI was a response to LEKRA, this must be seen in the context of the 1960s, because LESBUMI was formed in 1962. In this it differs from HSBI, which was formed as a response to LEKRA after the 1955 election.

Usmar's public lecture also outlined LESBUMI's approach to the controversial polemical issue of that time, the question of 'art for art's sake' ('*seni untuk seni*') or 'art for the People' ('*seni untuk rakjat*'). LESBUMI, he said, rejected 'art for art's sake' as a manifestation of liberalism in the arts, which implied that the function of art was merely to indulge the desires of human beings as individuals. At the same time, however, LESBUMI also rejected 'art for the People', which, he said, was being loudly bandied about ('*dikaokkan secara keras*') by certain groups (LEKRA and LKN).[20] This was especially the case when 'the People' actually referred to the political allies of these particular groups. For LESBUMI, art was a means of showing one's devotion to God.[21]

The cultural viewpoints of LESBUMI outlined in Usmar Ismail's lecture did not differ greatly from those of HSBI. In December 1963 the two organizations had joined with other Islamic cultural groups to hold a meeting in Jakarta under the title National Deliberation on the Development of Islamic Morals and Art (Musjawarah Nasional Pembangunan Moral dan Seni Islam). The chair and organizing secretary of the meeting were Djamaluddin Malik and Usmar Ismail from LESBUMI.[22] The meeting was judged a success, both from the point of view of the discussion itself and its contribution to the unity of Indonesian cultural organizations based on Islam. It resulted in the establishment of the Council for Deliberations on Islamic Culture (BMKI), under the leadership of Djamaluddin Malik, which was to play an important role in the success of the cultural program of the KIAA.

HSBI: A PIONEER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

Long before the emergence of LESBUMI, HSBI was a prominent organization in the area of Indonesian national culture. It was established in Jakarta on 24 September 1956, and like LEKRA, declared

20 For the Islamic view of 'art for art's sake' and 'art for the People', see Sidi Gazalba 1977:53-4.

21 In the title of the lecture (Usmar Ismail 1964a), the date of the meeting is given as '7 August 1964'. Originally scheduled for that date, the meeting was postponed until 12 August because the LEKRA representative was unable to attend. On 12 August, Usmar Ismail had another engagement in Bandung.

22 A report in *Gema Islam* 3-45 (1 January 1964) stated that the meeting had been organized by HSBI and the Council of Islamic Artists and Cultural Figures (MASBI, Madjelis Seniman Budajawan Islam). Subsequently, in *Gema Islam* 3-46 (15 January 1964):20 a correction was issued, confirming that the organization had involved HSBI, MASBI, LESBUMI, LEKSI, and the cultural association of the PSII.

itself free of any party political affiliation.[23] From the beginning, its main aim was to contest LEKRA influence in the wake of the PKI's strong showing in the 1955 general elections. Kratz (1986:70) notes that in 1956, LEKRA issued its revised manifesto, Mukadimah, which was originally drafted in 1950.[24] According to Kratz, LEKRA's use of the Arabic term for the title of its manifesto posed a challenge to Muslim artists and cultural figures of every kind.

It is clear that HSBI, like LESBUMI, came into existence under the influence of external circumstances, specifically in response to the close relationship between LEKRA and the PKI in matters of culture. By the time of LESBUMI, this relationship had become much more of a threat, because of the influence the PKI enjoyed under the protection of Soekarno in the early 1960s. Together with NU and the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party) the PKI was one of the pillars of Soekarno's united front of nationalist, religious and communist forces, a political mechanism that actually heightened tension and competition between the three groups, rather than creating unity between them. The intimacy of the relationship between LEKRA and the PKI was perceived as a threat not only by the Muslim artists and cultural figures associated with HSBI and LESBUMI, but also by those who, in Goenawan Mohammad's words (1988:11), were 'non-party' in their affiliations.

A different explanation for the emergence of HSBI is offered by Nuhrison M. Nuh in his study of the history and role of the organization. Nuh suggests that the impetus for the formation of HSBI came from H. Abdullah Aidid, head of the Division of Information on Religion in the Ministry of Religion (Djawatan Penerangan Agama, Kementerian Agama RI), who wanted to establish an Islamic organization active in the field of art and culture:[25]

> During the Asia-Africa conference in Bandung in 1955, he and a number of delegates from Islamic countries listened to a broadcast of traditional music on Indonesian State Radio (RRI, Radio Republik Indonesia). It attracted their attention, and when he returned from the conference, he instructed M. Nur Alian, then head of the

23 For a statement of the relationship between LEKRA and the PKI, see for example Kusni 2005:53, footnote 13.

24 The revised *Mukadimah* of 1955 was published in *Zaman Baru* 3 (3-6-1956). See Zaini 1957:47-8, footnote 15.

25 Most of those associated with the establishment of HSBI were from the Ministry of Religion, in particular the Division of Information on Religion. They included K.H.M. Saleh Suaidi, H.M. Arif Lubis, M. Nur Alian, H. Mas'uddin Noor, R.H.O. Hudaja, Ibu Djamari Amin, Zainal Abidin Harahap. C. Asror and M. Saad (Nuhrison M. Nuh 1984:25).

> culture section of the Division of Information on Religion, to think about the possibility of forming an organization or an institute to disseminate information on religion in the field of art and culture. When the association came into being, its instigator, H. Abdullah Maidid was serving as Indonesian chargé d'affaires in Jordan.[26]

Thus, in addition to being a response to LEKRA, HSBI was conceived as an important element in Islamic life in Indonesia, reflecting Hamka's view (1962:12) that Islamic culture was an integral part of life itself. The future of Islam would be determined by the strength of its culture. In Hamka's terminology, HSBI stood at a cultural crossroads with Hinduism, Christianity, the West, and the atheism of the left. To strengthen its position at this crossroads, and in reaction to concern about the lack of cohesion between Islamic groups, the HSBI, in its first National Conference (Muktamar I) in January 1961, took the important decision to establish the Council of Islamic Artists and Cultural Figures (Madjelis Seniman Budajawan Islam) known by its acronym MASBI. This Council was to be made up of ulama without regard to their political positions, along with other scholars and intellectuals with Islamic outlooks, and its function was to discuss various matters concerning the arts and Islamic culture in Indonesia. The HSBI conference directive stated that as soon as possible after the formation of MASBI (to be headed by Hamka), a meeting was to be held between the MASBI members and other Muslim artists and cultural figures, including those affiliated to HSBI.

This meeting, known as the Musjawarah Seniman Budajawan Islam (Deliberation of Islamic Artists and Cultural Figures) took place in December 1961. On the closing night, Hamka, speaking as head of MASBI, described the situation surrounding the establishment of HSBI:

> In the upheavals surrounding the development of our nation, it is clear that there has been a struggle for influence between Hindu culture and Western culture. At the same time, Christianity, which

26 Pada tahun 1955 tatkala ia mengikuti konperensi Asia Afrika di Bandung ia bersama delegasi dari negara-negara Islam mendengarkan langen suara yang disiarkan oleh RRI Jakarta. Hal itu menarik mereka, untuk itu setelah kembalinya ia dari mengikuti konperensi itu memerintahkan M. Nur Alian, yang pada waktu menjabat kepala seksi kebudayaan pada Jawatan Penerangan Agama, untuk memikirkan membentuk suatu organisasi atau lembaga yang bergerak dibidang penyuluhan agama dibidang seni budaya. Ketika himpunan ini lahir pemerakarsanya H. Abdullah Aidid sudah berada di Yordania, menjadi kuasa usaha RI disana (Nuhrison M. Nuh 1984:24-5).

> has lost much of its attraction in its countries of origin, has gone in search of new markets in the East. And on the extreme left comes a culture of those who do not believe in the existence of God. They too enter the fray with a militant stance.[27]

When it was formed in 1956, HSBI not only faced the perceived threat of the ascendancy of the PKI with its cultural underpinning in LEKRA, but also a generally cynical attitude towards art and culture in the Indonesian Islamic community. This dual challenge meant that from its inception, HSBI looked to the Department of Religion for official support. It was for this reason that it made K.H. Mohammad Iljas its major sponsor.[28] In fact, according to HSBI's head, Junan Helmy Nasution, HSBI was entirely K.H. Mohammad Iljas's idea, during his term as Minister of Religion as a member of Nahdlatul Ulama (Junan Helmy Nasution 1963:20).The social and political conditions of the time are captured in the words of Haji Amura:

> The consciousness of the younger generation of Muslims acquired tangible form with the formation of HSBI on 24 September 1956 with Minister of Religion K.H. Moh. Iljas as its major sponsor. Several years previously, the formation of an Indonesian Islamic Cultural Congress (BKKII, Badan Kongres Kebudajaan Islam Indonesia) had been canvassed, as a challenge to the efforts of LEKRA/PKI to control the cultural movement in our homeland. Unfortunately, the BKKII never evolved into anything, as it had a head, but no feet. A cultural movement cannot be constructed from above;

27 Didalam pergolakan pembinaan dan pembangunan bangsa sekarang ini djelas benar perebutan lapangan pengaruh diantara Kebudajaan Hindu dengan Kebudajaan Barat itu. Dalam pada itu muntjul pula Kebudajaan Keristen jang ditanahnja sendiri telah kehilangan daja, lalu mentjari pasaran kembali ke Timur. Dan disebelah kiri sekali datanglah Kebudajaan kaum jang tidak mempertjajai Tuhan. Mereka masuk dengan tjara jang militan pula (Hamka 1962:12).

28 K.H. Mohammad Iljas (1911-1970) was Minister of Religion in the cabinets of Burhanuddin Harahap (12 August 1955-19 January 1956), Ali-Roem-Idham (20 March 1956-9 April 1957) and Djuanda (9 April 1957-10 July 1959). In building and developing his department, he had a reputation for being able to stand above all competing groups, and among all NU Ministers of Religion he alone was not implicated in NU attempts to gain control over the department. As a result, his loyalty to the organization was questioned. He published two books dealing with Marxism and atheism, *Bagaimana pandangan Marxisme terhadap agama dan pandangan agama terhadap Marxisme* (The Marxist view of religion and the religious view of Marxism) (Jakarta: Endang, 1967) and *Bahaja atheisme terhadap keamanan sila Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa* (The danger to the principle of One Omnipotent God posed by atheism) (Jakarta: Pembina, 1968). See Masdar F. Mas'udi and Syafiq Hasyim 1998.

it has to be organized from below. In contrast to the BKKII, HSBI grew from below, with its feet formed before the head.[29]

PROPAGATING THE FAITH AND SERVING THE REVOLUTION WITH ART AND CULTURE

In the years following its establishment, HSBI limited its cultural activities to the fields of literature and especially drama, which involved both indoor and open-air performances (Amura 1964:19) as well as radio and television broadcasts (Nuhrison M. Nuh 1984:28). This focus on literature and drama was designed to overcome the reluctance of Indonesian Muslims to make use of art as a channel for proselytizing, in the light of past controversies. Memories of the events that followed Bahrum Rangkuti's 1949 dramatization for radio, *Sinar memantjar dari Djabal An-Nur* (The radiance that shines from the Mountain of Light), were still fresh in the minds of many. The broadcast had elicited a strong negative reaction among some Muslim groups because as a dramatization of the life of the Prophet Muhammad it could be seen as a violation of Islamic prohibitions on representation. As the author of the story on which the radio play was based, Bahrum Rangkuti (who is discussed further by Hairus Salim in his contribution to this volume) was regarded as insufficiently attuned to the sensitivity of Indonesian Muslims towards 'innovations' touching on religious concerns. The same was true of the controversy that surrounded A.A. Navis's 1955 short story, *Robohnja surau kami* (The collapse of our prayer house), set in a traditional Islamic boarding school in West Sumatra. Since it used satire as a means of raising the issue of fatalism in religious life, it provoked the same reaction as Bahrum Rangkuti's radio play, fierce opposition from within the Indonesian umma itself.[30]

29 Kesadaran angkatan muda Islam itu mendjadi kenjataan dengan dibentuknja suatu organisasi jang diberi nama Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI) pada tanggal 24 September 1956 dengan sponsor utamanja K.H. Moh. Iljas, jang ketika itu mendjabat sebagai Menteri Agama. Beberapa tahun sebelumnja telah pernah ditjetuskan idee pembentukan Badan Kongres Kebudajaan Islam Indonesia (BKKII) sebagai tantangan terhadap usaha Lekra/PKI jang hendak mendominasi gerakan kebudajaan ditanah air kita ini. Hanja sajang, BKKII tidak sampai berkembang, karena ia mempunjai kepala dan tidak mempunjai kaki. Gerakan kebudajaan tidaklah dapat disusun dari atas, tetapi lebih penting diatur dari bawah. Berlainan dari BKKII, HSBI ditimbulkan dari bawah, disusun dari kaki terlebih dahulu (Amura 1966:7).

30 Navis discussed this controversy in Abrar Yusra 1994:76-88. Although Abrar Yusra is listed as the author, he is more correctly the 'editor'. The book contains Navis's autobiography together with articles about him and his works. Pages 76-88 deal with the article titled 'Catatan kaki tentang cerpen '*Robohnya surau kami*'.

In his *Pandangan Islam tentang kesenian* (Islamic views on art) (1977), Sidi Gazalba discusses the attitude of traditional Islamic teachers towards HSBI.[31] The following quotation is of interest, because it discusses reactions to HSBI's use of drama as a forum for proselytizing:

> It often happened that when HSBI took its proselytizing plays into villages, they would first approach a prominent ulama in the village to explain their intentions. Usually the ulama would deny them permission to perform, saying that forms of artistic activity were prohibited by Islamic law (*haram*). The young HSBI activists would then say that they would obey all the ulama's instructions after he himself had watched their performance. So a performance was then staged for this principal and honoured spectator's inspection. As the performance was based on the Islamic view of art, primarily meaning that it was a representation of Islamic moral values, the response from the ulama was often along the lines of 'If this is what you do, I have no objections at all. This is not *haram*. I support your way of teaching people about Islam'.[32]

Experiences like this contributed to HSBI's enthusiasm for the development of Islamic art and literature as a forum for proselytizing, so that these forms would not become the exclusive preserve of groups they considered to be opposed to Islam. Clearly, the thinking here was to counter the cultural spirit of LEKRA, which was

31 In the preface to *Pandangan Islam tenang kesenian*, Sidi Gazalba explains that the book originated as a working paper for the Faculty of Islamic Studies in the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Apart from providing information for students, the book was intended as a response to questions raised in the academic community in 1976-1977 about Islamic views on art. Interesting in this context is that the Indonesian experience of the rise of Islamic genres in the arts in the 1960s via Muslim cultural organizations like HSBI, LESBUMI and others in confronting LEKRA inspired the Malaysian exploration of Islamic views about art in the 1970s. This adds a specific 'Islamic' dimension to the relationship of Indonesia being the 'exporter' of ideas to Malaysia, which Budiawan discusses in his contribution to this volume.

32 Peristiwa yang sering terjadi ketika HSBI memasuki desa-desa, membawa dramanya sebagai saluran dakwah adalah sebagai berikut. Mula-mula mereka datangi ulama yang terkenal di desa itu. Mereka sampaikanlah hasrat mereka. Biasanya ulama itu menolak. Karena kegiatan seni dipandangnya negatif, biasanya dihukumnya haram. Anak-anak HSBI akan menerima pandangan ulama itu setelah beliau mempersaksikan sendiri drama yang mereka bawakan. Setelah itu mereka akan patuhi segala arahan beliau. Maka sebagai penonton utama dan terhormat, ulama itu memperhatikan dengan saksama penyelenggaraan drama itu. Kerana HSBI membawakan pandangan Islam tentang kesenian, antara lain yang utama ialah pertunjukan karya itu mengandung nilai-nilai akhlaq Islam, maka sering sekali HSBI mendapat penilaian dari ulama-ulama yang diundangnya menonton itu: 'Kalau begini anak-anak kerjakan, saya tidak keberatan sama sekali. Yang begini tidaklah haram. Saya menyokong cara dakwah kamu ini' (Sidi Gazalba 1977:73-4).

often portrayed by the 'A' group (of NASAKOM) as atheistic, based on a denial of the existence of God.

In the early 1960s, rivalry between 'Islamic' and 'communist' groups was very overt, and the influence of LEKRA was accelerating in line with the growing strength of the PKI. HSBI, and later also LESBUMI and other Islamic cultural groups confronted this rivalry and the associated conflict openly, as can be seen in the text of Usmar Ismail's 1964 lecture to the employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs:

> But LESBUMI regards a culture that espouses atheism or agnosticism as imperialist culture that clearly conflicts with the philosophical outlooks of the State and People of Indonesia as enshrined in the Pancasila. In Islamic law, this is a culture of heathenism.[33]

However, apart from the energy required to compete with LEKRA, HSBI also faced the challenge of dealing with dissent in the Islamic community itself over its approach to the modernization of Islamic art and culture, as Sidi Gazalba shows in his 1977 book discussed above. In the five years after its establishment, HSBI made little progress, and its expansion continued to be limited by a lack of funding from Islamic bodies for cultural activities.

In its attempts to modernize Indonesian Muslim attitudes towards the potential of literature and drama as proselytizing media, HSBI was a genuinely pioneering organization. To a large extent it was successful in changing attitudes, although it later faced the problem of how to raise the quality of its performances and to give them an appropriate Indonesian character and identity. This question of Indonesian character and identity related to the fact that HSBI's performances often drew on Arabic cultural settings (Nuhrison M. Nuh 1984:31). Its successes owed much to the institutional, and probably also financial, backing it received from the Department of Religion. Following its first national conference, it declared itself ready to serve as a Pusat Rohani (PUSROH, Islamic Spiritual Centre) for members of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police, which helped to place it on a sound institutional footing. HSBI took note of the short-lived Council for the Indonesian Islamic Cultural Congress (BKKII, Badan Kongres Kebudajaan Islam Indonesia) (Hamka 1962:13; Amura 1966:7) which had been

33 Tetapi kebudajaan jang bernafaskan mengingkari adanja Tuhan atau menimbulkan keraguraguan adanja Tuhan, oleh Lesbumi pun dianggap sebagai kebudajaan imperialis jang terang2 bertentangan dengan filsafah Negara dan Rakjat Indonesia, Pantjasila. Malahan kebudajaan jang demikian didalam hukum Islam adalah kufur adanja (Usmar Ismail 1964a).

established in 1954 as a rival body to the BMKN (Badan Musjawarah Kebudajaan Nasional, Council for Deliberations on National Culture) which organized the national cultural conferences, and saw this as a reminder that HSBI needed strong backing to survive and prosper.[34]

HSBI: ALLYING WITH LESBUMI TO PLANT THE SEEDS OF MODERNIZATION IN ISLAMIC ART AND CULTURE

> In Indonesia, Muslim artists do not enjoy favourable conditions or the patronage of the ulama. Many of them face restrictions and a range of problems, not only by outsiders but also by ulama who are hostile to them, yet artists play an important role in society and have useful meaning to their audiences.[35]

After its January 1961 National Conference, HSBI's future seemed assured. Internal conflicts over the modernization of art and culture among the umma proved to a large extent to be containable, especially after the December 1961 Deliberation of Islamic Artists and Cultural Figures that was jointly organized by HSBI and MASBI. Following this latter conference, any questions about the legitimacy or otherwise of an artistic activity according to Islamic law were referred to a set of edicts (*fatwa*) which the conference had issued. It also had a positive impact on Islamic artists and cultural figures outside HSBI, thus generating the sense of a broader Islamic cultural movement. The subsequent emergence of cultural organizations associated with Islamic political parties indicated that HSBI was no longer alone in its confrontations with LEKRA.

Three working papers were presented to the December 1961 Musjawarah Seniman Budayawan Islam: 1. *Tindjauan kebudajaan dan kebudajaan Islam serta pertumbuhan di Indonesia* (A review of culture and Islamic culture and their growth in Indonesia), presented by Sidi Gazalba B.A. representing the young generation; 2. *Kebudajaan dan*

34 The BKKII was an initiative of Hamka and his colleagues that was launched at the 1954 Congress on Indonesian Culture (Kongres Kebudajaan Indonesia) which was organized by BMKN. Hamka (1962:13) stated that the BKKII was a response to the rapid development of other cultural movements (referring to LEKRA) in the 1950s.

35 Di Indonesia seniman Muslim tidak mendapat kedudukan yang baik, serta dapat perlindungan dari para ahli-ahli agama, banyak para seniman Muslim, karena banyak rintangan serta banyak masalah-masalah yang harus dihadapi, bukan hanya dihadapi oleh orang luar saja tetapi juga para ulama memusuhinya, sedangkan peranan seniman punya arti yang penting di kalangan masyarakat, punya arti yang berguna di kalangan penggemar (Jassin 1983:88).

kesenian menurut hukum Islam (Culture and art according to Islamic law), presented by H. Abdullah bin Nuh representing the ulama; and 3. *Mengembangkan kebudajaan dan kesenian menurut adjaran Islam* (Developing culture and art according to Islamic teachings), presented by H. Moh. Saleh Suaidy representing the Ministry of Religion. The conference succeeded in drafting a resolution defining the position of Islam in relation to the 'Indonesian identity' that formed one of the principles of Manipol-USDEK, as Soekarno's 1959 formulation of political and ideological orthodoxy came to be known.[36] In addition, it formulated the following principles and guidelines concerning art and Islam: 1. art is a legitimate activity according to Islamic law (*halal*); 2. in pursuing artistic activities, there is a need to avoid actions that are *haram*; 3. in relation to sculpture, there are widespread concerns, because sculpture is susceptible to the sin of polytheism (*kemusyrikan*) (Sidi Gazlaba 1977:71-2; Amura 1962: 25-7). In essence, the conference determined that art was legitimate according to Islamic law. This then became the guiding principle that HSBI attempted to implement in its activities in the field of art and culture:

> Armed with this determination by the ulama the way was open to HSBI to take on LEKRA and fortify Islamic youth against becoming prey to LEKRA, as well as providing opportunities for young Muslims to satisfy their artistic sensibilities. At that time there were four Islamic parties, each of which now moved quickly to form their own art institutes.[37]

The organization of the Musjawarah Seniman Budayawan Islam with support from the Department of Religion, and the edicts on religion and art that the conference issued, provided the impetus for greater cooperation between Muslim artists and cultural figures as well as between Muslim political parties and other Islamic organizations. As mentioned earlier, NU established LESBUMI, PERTI set up LEKSI, the PSII founded LAKSMI and Muhammadijah launched ISBM, to name a few. HSBI itself became an art and culture forum for activists and sympathizers of MASJUMI, the party

36 Kratz 1986:72. The principles summarized in the acronym USDEK were: UUD 1945 (the 1945 Constitution), Sosialisme à la Indonesia (Indonesian-style Socialism), Demokrasi Terpimpin (Guided Democracy), Ekonomi Terpimpin (Guided Economy) and Kepribadian Indonesia (Indonesian Identity).

37 Dengan bersenjatakan fatwa ulamak-ulamak itu terbukalah bagi HSBI kegiatan-kegiatan, baik menyaingi LEKRA, membentengi pemuda-pemuda Islam supaya jangan sampai menjadi mangsa LEKRA, menyediakan kesempatan bagi kaum muda untuk memuaskan rasa-seninya. Ketika itu ada empat parti Islam. Masing-masing parti tidak ragu lagi menubuhkan lembaga keseniannya sendiri (Sidi Gazalba 1977:72).

that had been banned by Soekarno in August 1960. All of these organizations were attempting to present a different face of Islam in the field of art and culture. LESBUMI, for instance, differed from HSBI in that it was both a cultural movement and a political association, whereas HSBI remained an Islamic cultural organization that was not directly involved in politics.

HSBI's successful promotion of Islamic-based art and culture activities owed much to the role played by Junan Helmy Nasution, who was appointed as a new leader of the organization at the January 1961 National Conference. Replacing Nur Alian, a Ministry of Religion figure, Junan approached his role in a more proactive way, perhaps reflecting his military background. He was an Army captain who at the time was head of Bureau III of the Jakarta branch of the Army's Islamic Spiritual Centre (PUSROH Islam Angkatan Darat). Previously he was head of the Regional Executive of the Greater Jakarta HSBI, and was known for his prolific work in Islamic-inspired theatre and drama (Indonesia O'Galelano 1963:21-3). A sense of his contribution to HSBI is conveyed in the following comments by Indonesia O'Galelano:

> Apart from his dedicated attention to administrative matters, Yunan's[38] tenacity was evident in a performance of the story of the Birthday of the Prophet (Maulid Nabi) in the arena theatre of the Al-Azhar Mosque in Kebayoran Baru. The scale of this performance was unprecedented in the history of Indonesian drama, with an audience of around 30,000 people and 15 horses taking part in an exploration of statements by the Great Prophet and propagation of their significance for the life of our nation. And for the first time too, Yunan's HSBI compiled a recognized program of action for Islamic drama, which became a basis for activities that formed part of the struggle to intensify the propagation of Indonesian Islam.[39]

HBSI's change of leadership in December 1961 served to indicate that its institutional support came not only from the Department

38 Nasution's first name is spelt interchangeably as Junan and Yunan. Quotes follow the spelling used in each case.

39 Bukti dari kegigihan Yunan disamping tekun dibalik medja tulisnja, ialah pada pergelaran kissah Maulid Nabi dalam bentuk arena teater dihalaman mesdjid Agung 'Al-Azhar' Kebajoran Baru, dimana untuk pertama kalinja sedjarah drama Indonesia dapat memiliki, penonton sedjumlah k.l. 30.000 orang dan sedjumlah 15 ekor kuda digiring ketempat itu untuk disuruh berperan, dalam rangka menggali dan mensiarkan pernjataan Nabi Besar ini bagi kehidupan bangsa kita. Dan untuk pertama kali pulalah – H.S.B.I. Yunan menjusun chittah seni drama Islam jang terkenal, jang mendjadi dasar berpidjak dan berdjoang untuk intensifikasi da'wah Islam Indonesia (Indonesia O'Galelano 1963:22-3).

of Religion, but also from the military. Under Junan's leadership the organization underwent a period of rapid development. Within 18 months or so performances were staged in a number of cities and towns all over Java and also in South Sumatra. Plans were also underway for performance troupes to visit provinces in Kalimantan, Sulawesi and West Irian, making use of the bureaucratic structures of the Department of Religion and the Army to promote the mental and spiritual development of the umma throughout Indonesia. To this point, drama was the 'outstanding product' in HSBI's activities in the field of art and culture.

The appearance of *Gema Islam*, a journal of Islamic culture and knowledge, in early 1962, soon after HSBI's national conference in January 1961, was another clear indication of military support for the organization.[40] Its publication was a purely military initiative, in the framework of the 'Planned Universal Development' (Pembangunan Semesta Berentjana) program, especially in relation to mental and spiritual development. In the interests of this program, General Abdul Haris Nasution assigned three middle-ranking officers, Brigadier General Soedirman, Lieutenant Colonel M. Rowi and Lieutenant Colonel Moh. Isa Edris, to non-military duties as executors, managers, and members of the editorial board of *Gema Islam*. The difficulties which HSBI had always experienced financially were alleviated with the publication of the journal, allowing other cultural activities to proceed more smoothly and regularly than in the past.

The involvement of these three middle-ranking officers in the management of *Gema Islam*, along with the expansion of HSBI throughout Java and beyond under Junan's leadership seems to have been the impetus for LEKRA and the PKI's attention to a cultural movement dedicated to 'soldiers' (*pradjurit*). It was not until 1964, in his speech to LEKRA's National Conference on Revolutionary Art and Literature (KSSR, Konfernas Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner), that Aidit extended the designation of art for 'workers' (*buruh*) and 'peasants' (*tani*) to include 'soldiers', bringing Indonesian terminology and practice into line with the Maoist doctrine

40 The editorial in *Gema Islam*'s inaugural issue stated that the magazine was published as a cooperative venture between the military, the Central Islamic Library Institute (Jajasan Perpustakaan Islam Pusat) and the community: 'The composition of the editorial board and contributors reflects the close cooperation that exists between ourselves, military figures, members of society, and the broader community itself. We have joined together in the interests of our nation and the state we are constructing, and above all else, "in the interests of Islam, our guide in life and death".' ('Dalam susunan redaksi dan para pembantu terlihatlah gambaran kerdjasama jang erat diantara kami, orang2 militer, anak masjarakat, dengan masjarakat itu sendiri. Tergabung djadi satu untuk kepentingan bangsa dan negara jang sedang kita bangunkan, dan diatas dari itu semuanja "Bagi kepentingan agama Islam, pegangan kita dalam hidup dan mati kita".') See 'Pembuka kata' *Gema Islam* 1-1 (15 January 1962):3.

of revolutionary art and literature. According to Aidit, the Indonesian Armed Forces was: 1) anti-fascist, democratic, anti-imperialist and committed to socialism; 2) a weapon in the great struggle of the New Emerging Forces (NEFO) against the Old Established Forces (OLDEFO);[41] and 3) a means of defending the integrity of the territory and unity of the Indonesian nation. For that reason, he said, '*revolutionary art and literature must not only be dedicated to the workers and peasants, but also to the soldiers*'.[42] In celebrations marking its seventh anniversary on 24 September 1963 and the announcement of its forthcoming Second National Conference (Muktamar II) the following December, HSBI reaffirmed its institutional status. In his *Tudjuh tahun H.S.B.I. 24 Sept. 1956 – 24 Sept. 1963* (Seven years of HSBI, 24 Sept. 1956 – 24 Sept. 1963) Junan confirmed that HSBI was ready to serve as a tool of the Department of Religion and an Islamic spiritual centre for all branches of the Armed Forces (Junan Nasution 1963). In the same document he also noted that as of 1963 HSBI had 80 branches throughout Indonesia.

Junan stated there was a need for a restructuring of the organization's institutional basis. There was to be a clear division of tasks between two separate bodies, the first comprising 'arts workers' ('*karyawan seniman pekerdja*') whom Junan described as the manual labourers, which would be delegated to the HSBI Central Leadership (Pimpinan Pusat HSBI). The second body was the 'arts and culture thinkers' ('*karyawan seniman budajawan pemikir*'), who would formulate the blueprints, the sketches for the Islamic art that was to be given form by others which would be delegated to MASBI. These two bodies together formed the structural basis of HSBI. As Junan proposed, 'A "building" cannot be constructed only by manual labourers without engineers, and vice versa' ('*Tidak mungkin ada "bangunan" hanja dengan kuli pengangkut batu belaka tanpa insinjur dan sebaliknja*'). In that same year, 1963, MASBI, whose members now numbered 30 ulama, 10 academics, five religious leaders (*zuama*) and 20 Islamic artists from different branches of the arts held its own conference in Jakarta.[43] This conference gave its support to the restructuring of HSBI's organizational basis.

It was thus primarily through literature and drama that HSBI attempted to plant the seeds of modernization in Islamic art and culture. Initially, this was seen as a way of countering the devel-

41 On NEFO and OLDEFO see Weatherbee 1966.

42 '[s]astra dan seni revolusioner tidak hanja harus diabdikan kepada buruh dan tani, tetapi djuga kepada pradjurit'. (Aidit 1964:30-1, italics in the original.)

43 The majority of MASBI's members were men. One of the women members of the Council was Aisjah Amini, a prominent Islamic political figure of the time. See www.tokohindonesia.com/ensiklopedi/a/aisyah-aminy/biografi/bio06.shtml.

opment of LEKRA, and, in Sidi Gazalba's words, fortifying Islamic youth against 'falling prey' to LEKRA. Yet the challenges faced by HSBI came not only from outside the world of Islam but also from within the umma itself, specifically in relation to viewpoints that regarded all artistic activity as *haram*. Its efforts to introduce new forms of literature and drama as proselytizing media also faced the problem of the traditional Islamic community's lack of familiarity with these art forms. The involvement of women in its performances (women appeared alongside male performers on stage) was also something traditional Muslim circles found hard to accept. Through the edicts solicited from the 'elders' (*kaum tua*) during the 1961 Musjawarah Seniman Budajawan Islam, HSBI attempted to problematize the relationship between religion and modern art and culture in Indonesia. Its efforts subsequently led to similar actions by groups of Islamic artists and cultural figures in other organizations, such as LESBUMI in relation to NU.

The role that LESBUMI, under the influence of Djamaluddin Malik, Usmar Ismail and Asrul Sani, played within NU inspired HSBI to take further steps towards the modernization of Islamic art and culture in Indonesia. For example, members of the Arts Study Club (ASC), a body founded by HSBI, organized a discussion of Asrul Sani's film *Titian serambut dibelah tudjuh* (*The passage*), which took place at the Army Islamic Spiritual Centre on 18 November 1962. Discussions like this were seen as a way of contributing to the development of Indonesian film, particularly in relation to thinking about the future production of Islamic-inspired films (Sanusi Hasan 1963:25-6).

It appears that both HSBI and LESBUMI aspired to the creation of an 'Islam with a modern culture'. Yet their efforts to modernize Indonesian Islamic art and culture at this time coincided with a political situation that was approaching a climactic end. In his Independence Day address of 1964, Soekarno had declared 'a year of living dangerously' (*tahun vivere pericoloso*). Just how dangerous it was to be only became clear a little over one year later.

CONCLUSION; THE END OF THE DREAM OF THE RESURGENCE OF ASIA-AFRICA ISLAM

The chapter on Indonesia which Soekarno had been instrumental in having added to the Indonesian translation of Stoddard's *The new world of Islam* dealt with Indonesian Islam in the period between 1900 and 1920, showing that along with Turkey, Egypt, Pal-

estine and India, Indonesia had been one of the centres of Islamic renaissance and revival in the Asia-Africa world. It demonstrated the significance of Indonesia, a nation whose population was predominantly Muslim, to the rise of Asia-Africa. At the same time, it informed the Indonesian umma about their own past, as they took part in revolution and explored the spirit of Islamic struggle in other parts of the world.

The readers of the Indonesian translation of Stoddard's book were called upon to place themselves in the world of the early twentieth century, the years following the First World War. They did not find any discussion in the book of the period in which the book was translated, but this was something that they had experienced and witnessed for themselves. One after another, in the years following Indonesian independence in 1945, Islamic nations or nations with majority Islamic populations in the Asia-Africa region had gained their own sovereignty and independence.[44] In a period of less than 50 years colonial oppression and the formal institution of colonialism had disappeared from the Islamic world, a startling experience of freedom that had been felt by all the peoples of the Asia-Africa region. The question remained, however, of how these newly independent nations with majority Islamic populations viewed colonialism in the broader sense that Soekarno had termed NEKOLIM (neo-colonialism and imperialism).

In contrast to the experience of other newly independent nations in the Asia-Africa region, Indonesian government policy in the period between 1959 and 1965 attempted to create a political, social and cultural life based on the confluence of nationalism, Islam, and Marxism, building on the ideas that Soekarno had first enunciated in the 1920s (Sukarno 1964:1-23). Just as the unity of these three forces had been instrumental in destroying colonialism in Indonesia in the pre-independence period, said Soekarno, so too would they destroy the forces of NEKOLIM on the international level in the years following independence.

The organization of the first KIAA in Indonesia in 1965 was an opportunity for Soekarno to demonstrate that Indonesia, the country with the largest Islamic population in the Asia-Africa region, was experiencing its own resurgence. He was thoroughly convinced that Islam represented a mighty wave that could be a revolutionary

44 Mohammad Natsir 1982:21-2. Natsir lists the following Asia-Africa countries that gained independence in the period between 1945 and 1965: Indonesia dan Iraq (1945), Syria (1946), India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1947), Lybia (1952), Sudan (1955), Morocco (1956), Malaya and Tunisia (1957), Guinea and Mauritania (1958), Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Upper Volta and Somalia (1960), Algeria (1962), Malaya and North Kalimantan as Malaysia (1963), Gambia (1965).

force to crush the power of NEKOLIM, a lesson he drew from the spirit of Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Syaikh Muhammad Abduh. In the mass meeting of the KIAA in the Gelora Bung Karno stadium, watched by an audience of around 110,000 people, the conference bestowed on Soekarno the title of 'Hero of Islam and Freedom' (Pahlawan Islam dan Kemerdekaan) (Rosihan Anwar 1965:4). The countries of Islam were entrusting the future of their religion to the political path that Soekarno had trod.

The tragedy was that Soekarno's conviction that the unity of these three forces could be realized and maintained proved in the end to be misplaced. In this respect, Stoddard's predictions were prescient, especially where the dangers Bolshevism posed for both the Western and Eastern worlds were concerned. 'Certainly', Stoddard wrote, 'any extensive spread of Bolshevism in the East would be a terrible misfortune both for the Orient and for the world at large.'[45] Rather than proving Stoddard wrong, Soekarno demonstated the truth of what Stoddard had predicted.

Translated from Indonesian by Keith Foulcher

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12

Getting organized
Culture and nationalism in Bali, 1959-1965

I Nyoman Darma Putra

Studies of Indonesian cultural institutions and their associated political movements from 1950 to 1965 focus mainly on a single organization – namely Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture) (Yahaya Ismail 1972; Foulcher 1986; Taufik Ismail and D.S. Moeljanto 1995). To some extent, such studies cover the 1963-1964 conflict between LEKRA and the group behind the Cultural Manifesto (Manifes Kebudayaan, disparagingly referred to as Manikebu by its opponents) (Foulcher 1969; 1994; Goenawan Mohamad 1988). Even then, however, most studies on LEKRA, including those that cover the conflict with the Cultural Manifesto, discuss activities at the national level and overlook what happened at the regional level. In general, existing studies provide an incomplete picture of arts and cultural movements and institutions in Indonesia during the 1950s and early 1960s.

The considerable attention given to LEKRA is understandable because this cultural organization, which was affiliated with the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) and had branches all over Indonesia, was highly organized, visible, and driven by a cultural political ideology that increasingly brought it into conflict with other cultural political groups and individual artists and writers who opposed its approach. It is arguable that LEKRA was the most influential cultural institution in Indonesia during this period. After the alleged Communist coup attempt in September 1965, and President Soekarno then deprived of effective power, LEKRA was banned by military decree in March 1966. Many of those who were members of, or accused of sympathy with LEKRA were brutally killed or jailed without trial. The controversial and tragic fate of LEKRA members and activists gives added importance to this cultural institution as a subject of study in various disciplines including literature, cultural history, and political and cultural violence.

However, apart from LEKRA, there were many other cultural institutions in Indonesia during the Soekarno period, including Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia (LESBUMI, Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures), Lembaga Kebudajaan Katolik Indonesia (LKKI, Indonesian Catholic Cultural Institute), Lembaga Kebudajaan Kristen Indonesia (LEKRINDO, Indonesian Protestant-Christian Cultural Institute), and Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional (LKN, Institute of National Culture). Like LEKRA, these cultural organizations were also affiliated with particular political parties or religious organizations and had branches across Indonesia.

LKN, which was affiliated with the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party) was one of the most important of these cultural institutions in terms of membership and national coverage. It had its central office in Jakarta and many branches spread throughout Indonesia ranging from provincial level down to district and village levels, parallel to the organizational structure of the PNI. The spread of LKN branches across Indonesia and its active role in serving the political goals of its parent organization paralleled the role of LEKRA during the debates surrounding the dynamic formation of Indonesian national culture from the late 1950s to 1965. Thus the role of LKN at the national as well as regional level cannot be ignored.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LKN

Unlike LEKRA, LKN has been under-represented in scholarly studies on the cultural history of Indonesia. Sutedja-Liem (2000) touches briefly on LKN in Bali in the context of conflict and cooperation between its members and other cultural organizations including LEKRA. But this discussion aims only to situate Balinese Indonesian-language poetry and a short story by the Balinese writer Rastha Sindhu in their social contexts. It does not claim to be a full exploration of the development and cultural activities of LKN Bali. In an earlier article dealing with the rise and fall of LEKRA in Bali (Darma Putra 2003), I discussed the conflict between LEKRA and LKN but explored more the development of LEKRA Bali rather than the development of the Balinese branch of LKN. While studies and publications on LEKRA continue to appear, especially the recent reproduction of literature by LEKRA members originally published in *Harian Rakjat* (Rhoma Yuliantri and Muhidin Dahlan 2008a, 2008b); and while recently there have been studies on other

cultural institutions from the 1960s such as LESBUMI (Choirotun Chisaan 2008), there is virtually nothing dealing with LKN. In studies of Indonesian literature, culture and politics in the 1960s, LKN is rarely mentioned. In fact it could be said that LKN has almost disappeared from the history of Indonesian culture and politics.

As a first step towards rectifying this omission, and in an attempt to contribute a regional dimension to the nationally oriented studies of cultural institutions in Indonesia of the 1950-1965 period, this essay investigates the Bali branch of LKN. LKN Bali was an important branch of the organization in terms of its capacity to compete against the aggressiveness of LEKRA in Bali. Bali is an interesting case because, unlike Sumatra, Java and Sulawesi,[1] the presence and role of Muslim and Christian cultural organizations at this time was minimal. LESBUMI and LKKI, for example, were present in Bali, but they were both small and had almost no solid organizational structure, unlike LEKRA and LKN.[2] As the two dominant cultural organizations in Bali, LEKRA and LKN were involved in a constant power struggle to dominate cultural discourse and activities on the island, either through performance events or political rallies (Putu Setia 1987).

As LKN and LEKRA were both leftist in orientation, it is particularly interesting to see the points of convergence and conflict between them. After LEKRA was banned in 1966, LKN became the dominant cultural organization in Bali during the power transition from Soekarno to Suharto. This essay focuses on two main areas: first, the development of the Bali branch of LKN, its relationship with the Central LKN and with other cultural institutions in Bali and beyond; and second, the arts and cultural activities of LKN Bali. It aims to show how dynamic cultural activities were at a regional level in Indonesia between 1950 and 1965 and how national politics influenced such activities. I argue that the existence of LKN Bali enlivened cultural activities on the island, in that members of this organization made enthusiastic use of a variety of traditional and modern art forms to express a veritable fever of nationalistic sentiment during this period.

This essay also aims to contribute some of the material required for a broader study of LKN and its place in Indonesian cultural history of the 1950s and 1960s. It is mainly based on newspaper reports and interviews with writers and cultural activists in Bali during the

1 See Marije Plomp and Barbara Hatley in this volume for a discussion of cultural organizations, figures and activities in Medan and Makassar respectively.

2 Interview with Paulus Yos Adi Riyadi, Denpasar, 27-6-2009. He was a writer and former deputy chief of the Bali branch of the Catholic Party. His poetry from the 1960s is discussed below.

period under investigation.[3] However it does not pretend to be an exhaustive survey of newspaper reports from this period. What follows is a brief description of LKN and its principles as a national organization, followed by the development of the Bali branch of LKN and its cultural activities.

CENTRAL LKN AND ITS PRINCIPLES

LKN was established as a national cultural institution in 1959 at a congress held in Solo, Central Java. The Congress was deliberately timed to begin on 20 May to coincide with Hari Kebangkitan Nasional (National Awakening Day), to stress the importance of its nationalist spirit.[4] The Congress lasted for three days, and was held in Solo not only because of its central location but also because Solo had long been recognized as a centre of art and culture. LEKRA had also held its national Congress in Solo between 22 and 28 January of the same year.

The Congress was initiated by the PNI as part of the implementation of its resolutions of December 1958,[5] as a demonstration of the party's commitment to the development of Indonesian national culture. For the PNI, the advancement of a nation depended on its cultural progress, and the Congress was held 'to unite arts and cultural organizations and individuals whose thoughts have proven or are expected to be in harmony with the ideas of the PNI in the field of culture'.[6] It is clear that the motivation for the Congress was the party's perception that a cultural organization promoting the ideals of Indonesian nationalism would serve the interests of the PNI in the same way that LEKRA supported PKI interests through its promotion of Marxist-oriented cultural expression. At the Congress, the young poet Sitor Situmorang (b. 1924), who was one of its initiators, was elected as the leader of LKN.

3 I would like to thank all participants in the Indonesian Cultural History Project especially Jennifer Lindsay who kindly shared with us numerous items from the magazine *Budaya* (1955-1958) and Michael Bodden who shared with me several relevant articles from *Harian Rakjat*. I am also grateful to Jennifer Lindsay, Barbara Hatley, Keith Foulcher and Maya Liem and all participants in the project workshop for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the article.

4 National Awakening Day is an annual celebration that marks the founding in 1908 of Boedi Oetomo, the organization seen as the beginning of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

5 'Besok kongres LKN dimulai', *Suluh Indonesia,* 19-5-1959.

6 '[u]ntuk menjatukan organisasi2/perseorangan kebudajaan dan kesenian jang pikiran2nja memang telah dan diharapkan akan dapat seiring dengan pikiran2 PNI dilapangan kebudajaan', see 'LKN seiring dengan PNI dlm soal kebudajaan', *Suluh Indonesia,* 27-5-1959.

Sitor Situmorang, elected head of LKN, addresses the LKN Congress in Solo 1959. (Arsip Nasional RI, Gelora Indonesia reel 375)

President Soekarno was invited to open the LKN Congress but was absent because he was on an official visit to Brazil. Instead, he sent a page long speech to the Congress, a copy of which was published on the front page of the PNI-affiliated Jakarta newspaper, *Suluh Indonesia*, on 20 May 1959, the first day of the Congress.[7] In his speech, Soekarno endorsed the Congress by encouraging artists to 'use your art as a tool for development' (*Pakailah senimu sebagai alat pembangunan*). He added that the arts should also become 'a driving force for the creation of a strong united nation which under Guided Democracy moves towards socialism à la Indonesia'.[8] In addition to supporting the Congress, Soekarno donated some of his memorabilia to the committee to be auctioned to generate funds for LKN (Bu Har 1959).

7 Soekarno's speech was reproduced in 'Laporan kongres LKN'.

8 '[t]enaga pendorong pula bagi tertjiptanja Negara Kesatuan jang kuat jang dengan Demokrasi Terpimpin menudju ke sosialisme à la Indonesia'. The text of the President's speech was reproduced in the Congress booklet.

The Solo Congress was attended by 150 participants, comprising delegates from 21 provinces, a fact that suggests that LKN had been in existence in almost all provinces of Indonesia prior to the declaration of the Central LKN. The Congress was also attended by observers and foreign guests including cultural attachés from India, America, Canada, and Yugoslavia. The committee went to great efforts to make the Congress a national event that could attract wide public attention. Pre-Congress activities began on 8 May in Jakarta with a heroic and festive ceremony attended by PNI leaders which included the handing over of LKN flags and banners to be carried by relay to Solo. The relay was supported by sympathisers of PNI, branch members and other affiliated organizations in every town it passed through on the 900 kilometre journey. The relay reached Solo on 19 May, one day before the Congress began. More elaborate cultural events were organized to mark the Congress, including a lively cultural parade on the theme of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) and three nights of performances by LKN regional delegations, all of which attracted a great crowd. A newspaper report noted that the town of Solo 'was enveloped in a "festival of arts"' (*Solo diliputi 'pesta seni'*).[9] It was in such a lively arts and cultural festival that the Central LKN was born.

Unlike LEKRA, which was first established at the national level in 1950 and then followed by the formation of its regional branches throughout Indonesia, the Central LKN was formed after the prior existence in some regions of the organization under the same name. Before the Solo Congress, LKN had already existed as one of many organizations affiliated to the PNI. The branch in the city of Solo, for example, already existed in 1955, while Bali already in 1956 had what was called the Denpasar branch of LKN.[10] There were also organizations called LKN in North Sumatra, Central Java and Makassar, but there was no close relationship between them. All of these LKN organizations were affiliated to the PNI in their respective regions. Besides LKN, the PNI also had many other affiliated organizations including Pemuda Marhaenis (Marhaenist Youth), Wanita Marhaenis (Marhaenist Women), and Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (GMNI, Indonesian National Students' Movement). Collectively, including LKN, these organizations were called the Marhaenist Front. There was a loose organizational relationship between organizations in one region and another, but they all shared one ideology, which was 'Marhaenism', the ideology of their parent organization, PNI.

9 'Kongres Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional dimulai', *Suluh Indonesia,* 2-5-1959.

10 See the news section 'Berita kebudayaan' in *Budaya* 5-9 (September 1956):420. See also the Solo Congress booklet, especially the list of committee members that includes three Balinese names (1959:13).

The term 'Marhaenism' was adopted by Soekarno in the 1920s from the name of a poor farmer, Marhaen, who suffered a great deal and did not have enough to live on. Sukarno met this farmer and turned his name into a concept 'to describe the destitute People of Indonesia' (Feith and Castles 1970:157). Marhaen is often loosely associated with the word '*proletar*', (*proletariat*) the Marxist term for labourers and working class people, although the two are not quite equivalent. In his speech entitled 'Marhaen and Proletarian' which was delivered at a PNI gathering on 3 July 1957, Soekarno reintroduced Marhaenism as a way of talking about the people of Indonesia, who may own their land and their tools of production, but still remain desperately poor because they are subject to an exploitative system. Soekarno said 'almost all of the People of Indonesia are Marhaen' (Feith and Castles 1970:157).

In an important national meeting on 25 August 1964 in Jakarta, LKN once again emphasized its position as an institute fully committed to 'implementing Soekarno's guidelines in the field of culture' (*melaksanakan garis besar Bung Karno dibidang kebudajaan*).[11] The principles emerging from this meeting make it accurate to say that LKN was a Soekarnoist cultural institution (Foulcher 1994:3).

LKN members reflected the spirit of Marhaenism in drama, prose and poetry. They adopted the spirit of Marhaenism in various contexts but mostly focused on two aspects, namely the importance of nationalism and the People's struggle. For instance, the first dramatic production by the LKN Theatre Institute (Lembaga Drama LKN) entitled *Djangan takut dilanda ombak* (Don't be afraid of being swept away by waves),[12] performed on 2-4 September 1964 in the Gedung Kesenian Jakarta, can be seen as a typical example of a play that emphasizes the importance of the People's struggle against oppression and exploitation. The play, based on a script by Motinggo Boesje (1937-1999), describes the struggle of a group of poor fishermen to free themselves from the exploitation of a greedy money lender. The happy ending of this story clearly suggests the sympathy LKN artists felt towards lower class people. The characterization of the poor fishermen in this play is symbolic of the hardship and untiring struggle of the Marhaen. Sitor Situmorang, who in 1963 said he was proud to call himself a writer active in the field of politics, also made clear the struggle and hardship faced by poor farmers, as shown in one of his poems:[13]

11 'Hasil musjawarah seniman2 LKN', *Suluh Indonesia,* 2-9-1964.

12 'Djangan takut dilanda ombak', *Harian Rakjat,* 29-11-1964.

13 This poem was quoted by a member of LKN Bali, I Wayan Warna, in his article 'Menudju Sastera Marhaenis', *Suluh Indonesia,* 8-5-1966 and 15-5-1966.

Hiduplah, hidup	**Long live the poor!**
Kaum melarat, kaum penggarap tanah tertjinta	You farmers of this much loved land
Karena tjinta pada hidup	You whose love of life
Tak pernah menunggu perintah	Means never waiting for orders
Apalagi dari tuan tanah	Especially from the landlords.

Whereas LKN and LEKRA shared themes dealing with the People's struggle and leftist ideology, in terms of religious values they showed a significant point of difference. LEKRA was perceived to support atheism because it was seen as an instrument of the PKI. LKN's position against atheism, however, was clear. As a secular organization, LKN took no stand on matters of religion. However, its support for Pancasila (which includes belief in God as the first principle) as part of the ideological underpinning of Indonesian nationalism meant that it did not provoke hostility from religious organizations. It was also an important contributor to the organization's acceptability in Bali.

THE BALI BRANCH OF LKN

As stated above, LKN was already in existence in Bali in September 1956, around three years before the Solo Congress. LKN Bali had several sections including gamelan music, dance, drama, literature, visual arts and film. Little is known about the activities sponsored by the organization, but from the areas of interest, it appears to have paid attention to both traditional and modern arts. LKN Bali attended the Solo Congress with great enthusiasm, which can be judged from the number of Balinese participants in the Congress. Transported by bus from Bali to Solo, the LKN Bali delegation consisted of fifty people including 'a number of special dancers' and gamelan musicians.[14] On the way to Solo, they were invited to perform in Banyuwangi, East Java, for two nights, which turned out 'to be a great success'. In Solo, they were joined by a couple of Balinese students who were studying at the Solo Arts College and members of the local committee for performing arts. Balinese delegates took part in the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika cultural parade and

14 'Rombongan LKN bertolak ke Solo; Sedjumlah penari2 istimewa dan djuru gambel Bali turut meriahkan', *Suara Indonesia,* 19-5-1959.

in the performing arts nights. The appearance and performance of Bali delegates was one of the highlights of the Congress arts festival.

After the 1959 Solo congress, a 'new' LKN Bali was established. The leader of PNI Bali appointed Merta Pastime (b. 1929), a civil servant and active member of PNI Bali, as the head of the LKN Bali. In a 2008 interview, Merta Pastime recalled that he was appointed as the head LKN Bali not because he had any personal interest or background in arts and culture but because he had been an active member of PNI Bali.[15] This suggests that PNI Bali was intent on securing full control of the organization. In the following years, district branches of LKN were established throughout Bali from district to village level, paralleling the branch structure of the PNI.

Like elsewhere in Indonesia, in Bali too LKN became the cultural arm of the PNI. Arts and cultural activities of the party were concentrated on or became the responsibility of LKN. In party celebrations, inauguration of leaders of the Marhaenist Front, and at political rallies, the LKN automatically became the body responsible for performing arts and entertainment. During a three-day celebration of the 38th anniversary of the PNI in Tabanan in 1965, for example, the LKN Tabanan branch performed dance and drama for the entire three days, beginning at seven o'clock in the evening and lasting until dawn, attracting a large crowd and enlivening the celebration.[16] In the parade watched by 300,000 people,[17] a drum band group of Marhaenist children (*putra/putri Marhaenis*) from Banyuwangi also participated, suggesting a close connection between the Front Marhaenis of Tabanan or Bali and Banyuwangi.[18] It is possible that the performance by LKN Bali delegates in Banyuwangi years earlier when they were on their way to the Solo Congress may have been the origin of this connection.

LKN and cultural politics

The activities of LKN Bali were affected by cultural politics at both national and local levels. In 1963, President Soekarno declared his campaign of Confrontation against Malaysia, stating that the newly formed nation was a puppet state of British neo-imperialism and arguing that British presence in Malaysia or Southeast Asia in gen-

15 Interview in Denpasar, 19-12-2008.
16 'Tabanan bermandikan tjahaja banteng', *Suara Indonesia,* 3-8-1965.
17 'Tabanan bermandikan tjahaja banteng', *Suara Indonesia,* 3-8-1965.
18 'Tahukah Anda?', *Suara Indonesia,* 2-8-1965.

eral would give Britain power to control the region and threaten the independence of Indonesia. Through a provocative campaign of 'Ganyang Malaysia' ('Crush Malaysia'), Soekarno stoked the spirit of nationalism and anti-neo-colonialism among the Indonesian people. LKN Bali actively promoted the spirit of the campaign through its arts and cultural activities, as I discuss further below, thus showing the unreserved commitment of LKN as a Soekarnoist cultural institution.

When in 1963-1964 there was tension at the national level between revolutionary cultural institutions and supporters of the Cultural Manifesto, the activities of LKN Bali were also affected. However, unlike the case of 'Crush Malaysia' where LEKRA and LKN in Bali were united in support of Soekarno's campaign, as they were at the national level, the position of LKN Bali in relation to the Cultural Manifesto was less predictable. Initially, a number of young Balinese writers who were members of LKN Bali including Raka Santeri (b. 1941) and Judha Paniek (1942-199?) became interested in the Cultural Manifesto group because they saw that it would support them in their opposition to LEKRA Bali. Both of these young writers received a mandate to disseminate the principles of the Manifesto among Balinese activists.[19] They were also appointed as Bali regional coordinators for the Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang Se Indonesia (KKPSI, All-Indonesian Writers' Conference), which was planned for March 1964 and organized by right-wing groups including Cultural Manifesto supporters with backing from the Indonesian army.[20] In a 1996 interview, Raka Santeri recalled how members of LEKRA frequently verbally attacked him and Judha Paniek at various political rallies.[21] However, after the central body of LKN allied with LEKRA and other left-wing organizations to attack the Cultural Manifesto, all members of LKN including those in Bali had to follow the organization's directive. As members of LKN Bali, Raka Santeri and Judha Paniek were forced to withdraw their support for the Manifesto. Organizational protection at that time was very important, thus Raka Santeri and Judha Paniek had no other choice except to follow the instruction from the Central LKN. They subsequently refused to be regional coordinators for the KKPSI.[22]

19 'Seniman 15 kota menyokong Manifes Kebudayaan', *Sastra* No. 9/10 Th III-1963, quoted in Taufik Ismail and Moeljanto 1995:436-7. In this article Raka Santeri and Judha Paniek are named as supporters of the Manifes Kebudayaan. [The Ismail-Moeljanto citation of *Sastra*, as it appears above, seems to be incorrect, as we were unable to trace this article according to this citation. Eds.]

20 For a complete list of convenors and participants in the KKPI, see Taufik Ismail and Moeljanto 1995:441-5.

21 Interview in Denpasar, January 1996.

22 'Tiga pengarang Bali menolak djadi koordinator KK-PSI', *Bintang Timur,* 5-3-1964, quoted in Taufik Ismail and Moeljanto 1995:309.

Although at the national level LEKRA and LKN took the same position in attacking the Manifesto, in Bali the dynamics of local politics meant that their relationship was full of tension. After the Cultural Manifesto was banned, the tension between LEKRA and LKN became very fierce, reflecting the conflict between the PKI and PNI respectively. The PKI and the PNI had been the two main political parties in Bali since the mid-1950s. By 1965, Bali's politics 'had become sharply polarized between the PNI and the PKI and their respective allies at the local and national levels' (Robinson 1995:212). The conflict between these two parties arose due to the poor implementation of the principles of NASAKOM by President Soekarno and the Governor of Bali. NASAKOM, an acronym of nationalism (*nas*ionalisme), religion (*a*gama), and communism (*kom*unisme), was Soekarno's political strategy designed to reconcile the interests of the nation's three main factions. In practice, every level of social and political activity had to comprise elements of NASAKOM through a political strategy known as Nasakomisasi (Nasakomization).

PNI and LKN were the nationalist element of NASAKOM. In March 1965, writers and cultural activists in Bali formed a NASAKOM-based organization called the NASAKOM Arts and Drama Team (Tim Seni dan Drama Nasakom) led by Raka Santeri (LKN) and MS Asrori (LESBUMI). Abang Kaler (LEKRA) held the position of secretary and M. Pasek Arsana (from Genderang Budaja Swastika, a Hindu-based cultural organization) was treasurer. A representative from LESBI (Lembaga Seni Budaja Indonesia, Institute for Indonesian Arts and Culture, affiliated to PARTINDO) was invited but did not turn up to the meeting. The goals set by the NASAKOM Arts and Drama Team were 'to tighten cooperation between NASAKOM mass cultural organizations in implementing their Revolutionary duties and to move towards a just and prosperous socialist Indonesia based on Pancasila'.[23] This organization planned cultural activities to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference, but no information has come to light as to whether this plan was realized. Newspaper reports, however, indicate cultural activities were carried out by groups that were part of the NASAKOM team, such as those of the Genderang Budaja Swastika that staged drama performances in Bali and the neighbouring island of Lombok.

23 '[m]empererat kerdja sama di antara ormas-ormas kebudajaan Nasakom dalam melaksanakan tugas-tugas Revolusi menudju masjarakat sosialis Indonesia yang adil dan makmur berdasarkan Pantjasila', see 'Team seni & drama Nasakom', *Suara Indonesia,* 18-3-1965.

But despite these attempts to bring the three NASAKOM factions together, it appeared that 'Nasakomization' in the cultural field was undermined by the power struggles going on between the organizations involved. Since Soekarno was close to the PKI and LEKRA, 'Nasakomization' in practice implied PKI infiltration into political and cultural activities. At the national level, the government privileged members of LEKRA, such as through the provision of more opportunities to take part in cultural exchanges and missions overseas, and in Bali the Governor of Bali, Anak Agung Bagus Sutedja, also gave the communists more support than the nationalists, thus upsetting an already precarious political balance.[24] Evidence of this, in relation to cultural activities, is that the governor supported the appointment of members of PKI and LEKRA to the local committee of the executive meeting of Afro-Asian Writers held in Bali in 1963,[25] while the nationalists, supposedly one of the elements of NASAKOM, were excluded. In addition, the Bali government often commissioned members of LEKRA to provide banners and posters for events or national celebrations, something that made members of LKN feel marginalized and led them to accuse the government of being unfair to elements of NASAKOM. In the lead up to the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Asia-Africa Conference in 1965, IGB Arthanegara (b. 1944) and other members of LKN Bali approached the Bali Provincial Government Secretary and falsely claimed that they had LEKRA's agreement to take the money that had been allocated for making posters for the celebration. While money was certainly needed for making posters, for Arthanegara and his friends from LKN what was more important was to pre-empt LEKRA and make sure that their ideas and slogans were printed on the posters.[26]

POLITICAL COMPETITION AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Given the particular strength of LKN in Bali, the question arises as to which organization, LEKRA or LKN, was the larger and more influential there. While there are no exact figures on membership

24 Anak Agung Bagus Sutedja (1923-1966?) disappeared, presumed murdered in the post-October 1965 purges.

25 The local committee was led by I Gde Puger, the leader of PKI Bali. See 'Menjambut teman seperdjuangan', *Harian Rakjat,* 21-3-1963.

26 Interview with IGB Arthanegara, Denpasar, 2-1- 2009.

numbers, LKN leaders estimate that their organization had a larger membership and more supporters than LEKRA in Bali because it extended right to the village level where supporters were more numerous than LEKRA's. However, although LEKRA had fewer members, their activists were more militant than LKN's, as former members of LKN admit.[27] Members of LKN used the PNI daily *Suara Indonesia* to publicize their cultural activities, whereas LEKRA used *Mingguan Fadjar*.[28]

Given the fierce conflict between LEKRA and LKN, it should not surprise us to see that the cultural activities of LKN Bali and its branches throughout the island were full of war-like language and attitudes towards LEKRA. This war of words can be clearly seen in the cultural activities of LKN Bali. The dominant forms of cultural activism concerned literature and the performing arts, as both were used to articulate key points of PNI propaganda.

LITERARY ACTIVITIES

Members of LKN Bali were very active in literary publication and the performing arts. In the field of literature, young writers like Raka Santeri, Arthanegara, Judha Paniek, Rugeg Nataran (1930-?) and Niniek Berata (b. 1945) published many poems and short stories in *Suara Indonesia* (now *Bali Post*), the local newspaper affiliated to PNI Bali in the 1960s. The themes of their poetry and short stories strongly reflect the ideology of the PNI, the teachings of Soekarno and the politics of national revolution and anti-neocolonialism. The writers were proud of Soekarno's teachings and quoted them through repeated mention of terms such as 'Pancasila', '*marhaenism*', '*nekolim*' or '*anti-nekolim*' (neo-colonialism), and '*revolusioner*'. The name of Soekarno himself appears in many poems by LKN writers, which had already been the case in Bali from the early 1950s. As well as publishing their work in newspapers, writers also read at poetry reading competitions or political rallies and celebrations, thus maximizing the potential impact of poems reflecting a spirit of nationalist fever.

27 Interview with IGB Arthanegara, 2-1-2009, and with Gde Dharna, 14-1-2008.

28 According to Widminarko, a journalist for *Suara Indonesia* in the 1960s and pro PNI student activist, *Mingguan Fadjar* used a catchy motto '*membudayakan merah dan memerahkan budaya*' or 'to make red politics an expression of culture and to make culture an expression of red politics'. Personal communication with Widminarko, 12-8-2009. Widminarko still writes for the *Bali Post*.

The message of a poem was regarded as being more important than its form and aesthetic qualities. One typical example of the propaganda poetry produced by LKN writers at this time is Arthanegara's poem *Laut* (Sea) that contains this provocative line:

> djangan biarkan bumi ini didjamah ummat tak ber-Tuhan /../
> do not let this land be taken by atheists /../
>
> karena mereka adalah musuh terbesar Pantjasila
> they are the greatest enemy of Pancasila
>
> (Arthanegara 1963)

The nationalist tone of the poem expresses the importance of defending the homeland, Indonesia. It not only emphasizes the importance of Pancasila as the basic principle of the Indonesian state, but also explicitly attacks atheism, which in Bali was associated with communism. It clearly reflects LKN's hostility towards LEKRA. Besides Pancasila, the term Marhaen and its variants also frequently appeared in titles of poetry by LKN members, such as *Padamu Marhaen* (For you Marhaen) by Manik Arsenaya,[29] *Kepada Suswati Marhaenis* (For Marhaenist army volunteers) by Niniek Berata,[30] and *Anak Marhaen* (Children of Marhaen) by Ngurah Parsua (b. 1945).[31]

During Confrontation against Malaysia, newspapers in Bali, especially *Suara Indonesia*, frequently published stories about this national campaign, in which students and youth were encouraged to volunteer to be sent to the battlefield in North Kalimantan (Kaltara). Soekarno's propaganda attack on Malaysia and his determination to crush neo-colonialism, known by the term Dwikora or the People's Double Command, was enthusiastically welcomed in Bali. Many students, male and female, came forward as volunteers. Members of the Marhaenist Front formed the Sukarelawati Wanita Marhaenis (Marhaenist Women Volunteers). Volunteers received basic military training including how to use weapons and throw grenades. In May 1964, a local newspaper stated Bali was ready to send 15,000 combatants to North Kalimantan.[32] Indonesian troops did fight in North Kalimantan, but according to Widminarko (b. 1942),

29 *Suara Indonesia,* 31-10-1964.

30 *Suara Indonesia,* 7-3-1965. Suswati stands for *sukarelawan* and *sukarelawati*, meaning male volunteer and female volunteer. It refers to those who were ready to go to the battlefield in North Borneo to attack Malaysia during Confrontation in the early 1960s.

31 *Suluh Marhaen,* 7-5-1966.

32 'Bali siap kirimkan brigade tempur', *Suara Indonesia* 30-5-1964.

a pro-PNI student and volunteer who received military training in Bali, the volunteers from Bali were never actually sent to North Kalimantan, and all the preparations on the island proved to be part of President Soekarno's overall show of force aimed at threatening the British 'puppet state' of Malaysia.[33]

On 2 February 1964, a newly established group named Gong Kronik supported by the Nationalist Front held a performance in Denpasar designed to fire the Crush Malaysia spirit.[34] A Balinese LEKRA activist, Putu Oka Sukanta, who was the leader of Gong Kronik, played important role in the program, which included drama and readings of poems expressing the spirit of nationalism and anti-colonialism.[35] In addition to poems by nationally-established poets such as Chairil Anwar, and work by LEKRA poets such as Agam Wispi (1930-2003) and H.R. Bandaharo (1917-1993), they also read poems by Putu Oka on the theme of Crush Malaysia including *Mengganjang Malaysia* (Crush Malaysia) and *Salam untuk Kaltar* (Greetings for North Kalimantan). In addition to this live performance, activists also read poems on radio to provoke the spirit of 'Ganyang Malaysia' and anti-neo-colonialism. Plays performed during the program included those of LEKRA writers such as P.H. Muid's *Kemarau* (Dry season) and Zubir A.A.'s *Lagu subuh* (Song of dawn) which Putu Oka directed.[36] In terms of the propaganda of anti-colonialism and Crush Malaysia, LKN writers shared the same ideological outlook as LEKRA.

LKN Bali writers quickly adopted and articulated the campaign against Malaysia through propaganda literature. Two examples are poems *Buat pedjuang Kalimantan Utara* (To the North Kalimantan heroes) (1964) by Asa K. and *Pedjuang Kaltara* (North Kalimantan heroes) (1965) by Kawi Yasa. Asa's poem supports the struggle of the people of North Kalimantan to crush the British and their federated state of Malaysia into dust ('*ganjang-ganjang hingga djadi debu*'). Yasa's poem calls for the eradication of neo-colonialism not only from Indonesian territory but also from Borneo and from the states of Asia and Africa. It emphasizes the spirit of unity among member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement in which Indonesia and Soekarno played an important role. The following extract from the poem reflects the optimism and over-confidence of Soekarno's propaganda in abolishing neo-colonialism in North Kalimantan:

33 Email communication with Widminarko, 7-8- 2009.

34 'Malam drama dan puisi; Mengganjang "Malaysia" di Denpasar', *Harian Rakjat* 9-2-1964.

35 Putu Oka Sukanta (b. 1939), poet, short-story and novelist, was involved with LEKRA and after the 1965 coup held as political prisoner from 1966-1976.

36 For a discussion of these two plays, see Bodden in this volume.

Pengorbanan... kemenangan... kemerdekaan	Sacrifice... victory... independence
Kemerdekaan rakjat Kaltara... rakjat AA	Independence for the people of North Kalimantan... people of Asia Africa
Kemerdekaan rakjat sedunia... menudju... Dunia Baru	Independence for people in the whole world... to move towards a New World
	(Kawi Yasa 1965)

The spirit of revolution and anti neo-colonialism was expressed in many poems by members of LKN Bali. Published in *Suara Indonesia*, the newspaper affiliated to the PNI, these writers were encouraged by the editor of the newspaper's literary column to write poetry and short stories on such revolutionary themes. In one note, the editor encouraged young writers 'to become the writers who make the greatest contribution to the Revolution, heading towards the glorious society of Socialist Pantjasila'.[37] In the same note, the editor criticized a short story by a young writer Dangin Harnama (1943-1996) that ends with a female character committing suicide, emphasizing that he should not write stories with such a pessimistic tone. The editor stressed that writers should 'help complete our Revolution with their works'.[38]

As though reflecting this editor's comment, Arthanegara published a short story entitled *Sri Kandi* (the name of a heroine) that takes the subject matter of 'Ganyang Malaysia'.[39] This story opens with a quotation from the well-known speech of Soekarno entitled *Tahun vivere pericoloso* (The year of living dangerously), delivered on 17 August 1964 in the midst of the campaign to attack Malaysia. The words are:

> 'I warn all Imperialists everywhere: do not touch the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, do not touch!' [40]

The main character in the story is a female named Nana Heriantini who goes as a volunteer (*sukarelawati*) to the battlefield of North

37 '[u]ntuk mendjadi penulis jang paling banjak menjumbang untuk Revolusi menudju masjarakat Sosialisme Pantjasila jang djaja', see 'Taman Muda Remaja', *Suara Indonesia,* 22-8-1964.
38 'Membantu penjelesaian Revolusi kita ini dengan karja2mu', *Suara Indonesia,* 22-8-1964, pp. 3.
39 *Suara Indonesia,* 10-10-1964. The common spelling of this word is Srikandi, as one word.
40 'Saja peringatkan kepada kaum Imperialis manapun: djangan mendjamah wilajah Republik Indonesia, djangan mendjamah!'

Kalimantan to help the people there fight against British troops. She is depicted as a brave soldier who manages to gun down five enemies. Although the story touches on the sadness of the heroine when she remembers her parents and boyfriend back home, overall it has a strong optimistic tone evident from the heroine's vow to return home to find a fiancé only 'once the neo-colonialist project in Malaysia is completely buried' (*kalau njata-njata projek neokolonialis Malaysia telah terkubur habis*). This theme is also evident in Made Ariaka's short story *Ke perbatasan* (Going to the border).[41] In this story, the male character (Made Sulah) has to cut his eight days' leave to four following the arrival of a telegram that asks him to go to Surabaya to join other volunteers going to the border region of North Kalimantan. Realizing that she is going to be left behind, Erawati (Sulah's fiancée) is initially confused and sad, but after she becomes aware that her boyfriend is involved in a national mission, she gives him her full support:

> Crush neo-colonialism. Back up the struggle of the People of North Kalimantan. Please do not return until the Puppet State of Malaysia has been crushed.[42]

Love was always a subtheme in the revolutionary poems and short stories by LKN Bali members. This is understandable because most of them were young at that time. Arthanegara, for example, was only twenty years old when he wrote *Sri Kandi*. Another active poet, Paulus J.M. Jauwboenbing (b. 1945) (also known as Paulus Yos Adi Riyadi) was only nineteen years old when he published his poem *Tjeritera buat Sri Hardini* (A story for Sri Hardini) which includes the line 'I became a volunteer to crush Malaysia' (*aku djadi sukarelawan mengganjang Malaysia*).[43]

Themes dealing with revolution and love were also apparent in the performing arts. At the national level, the spirit of 'Ganyang Malaysia' also inspired composers to create heroic songs to provoke sentiments of nationalism and anti-imperialism. Artistic and cultural activities in Bali were certainly influenced by national politics, but the relationship was also reciprocal because what happened in Bali also contributed to the ongoing nationalist fever throughout Indonesia.

41 *Suara Indonesia*, 9-5-1965.

42 'Tumpaslah Nekolim. Bantu perdjoangan Rakjat Kaltara. Kalau Negara Boneka Malaysia belum tertumpas djangan kembali.'

43 *Suara Indonesia*, 10-10-1964.

PERFORMING ARTS

Besides literature, LKN Bali was also very active in the performing arts, both traditional and modern genres. One of the popular traditional genres used to articulate the spirit of national revolutionary was *janger*, a type of performance that presents stories, and also social commentary, through songs and some dialogue. *Janger* started to become popular in the 1920s (De Zoete and Spies 1958), and flourished in the 1960s when it was used to convey social and political propaganda (Putu Setia 1987; Orenstein 1971). The language used in the dialogue of *janger* was a mixture of Balinese and Indonesian (Putu Setia 1987:95). Images of *janger* as a performance expressing the spirit of nationalism appear in a novel by Nur Sutan Iskandar (1893-1975) titled *Jangir Bali* (1964).[44] Although published in the 1960s, the novel is set in the 1930s against the backdrop of the emerging nationalist movement in Bali. It tells the story of a love affair between a nationalist youth from Java and a Balinese *janger* dancer whose performances spread the spirit of nationalism (Darma Putra 2008:95, footnote 22). It is a work of fiction, but it suggests that the use of *janger* as a vehicle of political propaganda originated in the colonial period. There is a clear thematic relationship between this *janger* story and themes that appeared at this time in short stories and poems. Balinese literature and performing arts have always been pre-occupied by social issues, but in the 1950s and 1960s social commentary came to mean political and social propaganda.

In the early 1960s both LKN and LEKRA frequently commissioned performances of *janger* for party celebrations or at the inauguration ceremonies of party leaders or social organizations. Through the songs in the *janger*, these two competing organizations often expressed pride in the ideology of their organizations. LEKRA's *janger* echoed the spirit of classless communist ideology (*sama rasa, sama rata*), while LKN's *janger* songs contained lyrics espousing the victory of the Marhaen and the glory of Pancasila (*marhaen menang Pancasila jaya*) (Putu Setia 1987:95). Metaphor was often used in the songs to mock opponents. For example, the song *Buah buni* (buni fruit) by Gde Dharna (b. 1931), the head of LKN Buleleng, was used by LKN to mock LEKRA through the politics of colour. The song says how red buni fruit taste sour, while black buni fruit taste very sweet – red being the colour associated with the PKI and LEKRA, while black was the colour of PNI and LKN. The song was explicitly used by LKN and the PNI to attack

44 The word '*janger*' is also spelt '*jangir*'.

what they saw as the cunning, immaturity, and dishonesty of both LEKRA and the PKI. In this way, performances by members of LKN and LEKRA not only reflected but also fuelled the tension between the two political groupings.

Apart from *janger*, drama was also used by nationalist artists to both entertain the public and express social and political propaganda.[45] The Hindu-based theatre group, Genderang Budaya Swastika, held drama performances in several places in Bali, as well as in Lombok. These performances told stories such as *Mayadenawa*, a tale about a defeated demon who forbade his people to pray to the gods, which was performed to encourage people to turn away from the atheism that communist influence had promoted (Darma Putra 2008:99-100). The *Mayadenawa* performance was first created in 1959 and by 1966 it had been staged more than ten times in Bali and twice in Lombok, in 1962 and 1963. The first tour to Lombok, commissioned by the Hindu Council, was to celebrate the Hindu holidays Galungan and Kuningan, while the second was for a charity night for the Lombok branch of the Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI, Indonesian Red Cross).[46] After 1966, *Mayadenawa* continued to be performed and was always 'a great success' (Mayun 1967:2-3). It gradually became an inspirational form of Balinese *drama gong*, a spoken drama with gamelan accompaniment initially using a mixture of Indonesian and Balinese languages, with actors wearing Balinese attire, and in its later development, towards the end of the 1960s, performed entirely in Balinese (DeBoer 1996; Putu Setia 1987; Darma Putra 2008).

One activity begun by LKN Bali in early 1965 that continued long after the coup later that year and the subsequent banning of the PKI and LEKRA, was the establishment of a drama festival and accompanying poetry reading competition. The first 'Drama festival and poetry reading competition', was held from 5 to 10 March 1965. Six groups attended, with only the districts of Gianyar and Singaraja not represented. The absence of these two districts was much regretted because both had long experience in drama and other performing arts (Buddy Satria 1965:3). Scripts performed for the festival were plays by nationally known writers such as Motinggo Boesje, Kirdjomuljo (1930-2000) and Singgih Hadi, as well as a local playwright, Heman Negara (1943-1991), all of whom were members of LKN. Poems on nationalistic themes were chosen for the poetry reading competition. All arts and entertainment activities became arenas for LKN to promote the political outlooks of its parent organization, the PNI.

45 'Theatre Denpasar menghibur ke desa', *Suara Indonesia*, 15-8-1964.

46 'Mayadenawa di Pedjeng', *Suluh Marhaen, Minggu*, 29-5-1966.

The genesis of the drama festival was the visit of a theatre group from LKN Yogya between December 1964 and January 1965. The goal of their Bali trip was to 'arouse the drama-minded spirit in Bali' ('*membangkitkan drama minded di Bali*'). During the visit, LKN Yogyakarta, led by Buddy Satria, gave performances in various towns and cities, including Singaraja, Tabanan and Denpasar. The group performed two stories, *Api di Lembah Mati* (Fire in the Valley of Death) by Singgih Hadi and *Malam pengantin di Bukit Kera* (Wedding night in Bukit Kera) by Motinggo Boesje (Nana Tantienna 1965). Reflecting on the success of LKN Yogyakarta performances in Bali, Widjaja (now known as Putu Wijaya), the Balinese dramatist who was then based in Yogyakarta, wrote in *Suara Indonesia* of the need for Bali to hold a drama festival, not only because Bali had under-utilized potential in this field, but also because drama could be used to disseminate ideology (*paham*) in a time of Confrontation.[47] Bali quickly responded to this suggestion, and within three months a five-day drama festival had been organized. It was held from 5-10 March 1965 and was such a success that LKN Bali decided to make it an annual event.

Buddy Satria, the leader of the LKN Yogya Drama Institute, came to Bali again in March 1965 specifically to observe the drama festival and poetry reading competition. As an observer, he published a series of six review articles in the local newspaper *Suara Indonesia* and praised the festival's success (Buddy Satria 1965). He discussed in detail the strengths and weaknesses of individual groups and their actors in terms of acting, directorship, vocal technique, blocking and interpretation of the play, concluding that Bali had many talented young dramatists. If they were willing to rehearse and perform more often, he said, the development of modern drama in Bali could outstrip developments in the main cities of Java. Satria also commented upon the Balinese-style carved trophy awarded to festival winners in place of the more common silver trophy, calling it 'an expression of national identity by LKN Bali'.[48] Modern-style theatre was not new to Balinese writers and cultural activists. In the early 1950s, students and cultural activists in Singaraja, north Bali, staged adaptations of works by national and international playwrights such as Utuy Tatang Sontani,[49] Andre´ Gide and Anton Chekhov (Sutedja-Liem 2000:163; Darma Putra 2008:97). Despite

47 Putu Widjaja 1965. Putu Wijaya is currently one of Indonesia's most prolific writers. In email communication (24-7-2009), he confirmed that he was the author of this article.

48 'Ini merupakan kepribadian nasional dari LKN Bali'. See Buddy Satria 1965.

49 The famous playwright Utuy Tatang Sontani (1920-1979), who wrote in both Sundanese and Indonesian, was associated with LEKRA and lived in exile after the events of 1965. He died in Moscow.

this, the influence from LKN Yogya remains significant because it was the direct incentive for LKN Bali to hold a drama festival.

LKN's legacy in Bali

The success of the March 1965 festival appears to have revitalized LKN Bali. After the festival, there was a renewed determination to be part of the development of Indonesian culture and national identity. This can be seen in a formal resolution in which members of the organization identified themselves as 'National Culture workers of Indonesia' (*para pekerdja Kebudajaan Nasional Indonesia*), foregrounding their national, rather than their Balinese, identity. The resolution consisted of three points:

> 1. We National Culture Workers of Indonesia resolve to dedicate our art and ourselves to the completion of the Indonesian Revolution with Marhaenism as the commander;
>
> 2. We National Culture Workers of Indonesia believe and are fully aware that the Message of the People's Suffering must be the only source of works expressing Indonesian National culture;
>
> 3. We National Culture Workers of Indonesia resolve to develop the Culture of National Identity in the spirit of Pancasila.[50]

The spirit of nationalism in this resolution is a direct rearticulation of the political thinking of President Soekarno. The influence of Soekarno's teaching throughout Indonesia was profound, and nowhere was this more so than in Bali. Balinese people saw Soekarno as a true leader, not only because of his personal political charisma which was often linked to his mother being Balinese, but also because of the following enjoyed in Bali by the PNI, the political party he founded. In addition, Soekarno was seen to be proud of Balinese culture (Vickers 1989:175), something that was evident in the numerous opportunities he provided for Balinese artists to rep-

50 'Kebulatan tekad LKN seluruh Bali', *Suara Indonesia*, 13-3-1965. (1) Kami para pekerdja Kebudajaan Nasional Indonesia bertekad bulat untuk mengabdikan seni dan diri bagi penjelesaian Revolusi Indonesia dengan Marhaenisme sebagai panglimanja; (2) Kami para pekerdja Kebudajaan Nasional Indonesia mejakini dengan sadar sesadar-sadarnja bahwa Amanat Penderitaan Rakjat haruslah mendjadi satu-satunya sumber penggarapan karja-karja Kebudajaan Nasional Indonesia; (3) Kami para pekerdja Kebudajaan Nasional Indonesia bertekad bulat untuk mengembangkan Kebudajaan jang berkepribadian Nasional dan berdjiwa Pantjasila.

resent Indonesian culture before state guests and as part of various overseas cultural missions.[51]

Following the coup of 30 September-1 October 1965, leftist activists and people considered to be sympathizers of the PKI in Bali were arrested, killed, or detained without trial (Robinson 1995). The massacres took place over almost all of Bali, especially in Denpasar and Singaraja. The victims, estimated to be in the thousands, included writers and artists. For instance, in Singaraja the poet, short story writer, journalist and LEKRA activist Putu Shanty was killed along with two of his children in December 1965. According to DeBoer, one result of the tragedy of mass murder in Bali was that attempts to continue the artistic activity faced a brief new reality in the shortage of talented dancers (DeBoer 1996). Even so, artistic life resumed immediately, albeit with a completely new cultural map with the Left and leftist expression silenced. LKN had to find a new position in this map.

After LEKRA was banned nationally in March 1966, LKN became unchallenged as the dominant cultural institution in Bali, and for a time its annual drama festivals continued without interruption. From 17-24 July 1966, LKN Bali held a drama gong festival and poetry reading competition week (*pekan festival drama gong dan deklamasi*). It was a continuation of the previous year's event, although modern drama was replaced by *drama gong* without any specific explanation given for the change. The 1966 festival was the first *drama gong* festival to be held since the 1965 coup. Its goal, in the nationalistic rhetoric of LKN's leader Merta Pastime, was to encourage artistic creativity as a contribution to a society that had been in the process of completing the Pancasila revolution.[52] During the transition era to the New Order regime, the rhetoric and teachings of Soekarno still echoed in Bali, at least until mid-1966. This can be seen from a resolution of the regional conference of LKN Bali that was published in *Suluh Marhaen*. One of the articles of the resolution stated that LKN Bali was committed 'to strengthen the Marhaenist ideology of Soekarno's teachings among cultural workers'.[53] Other evidence included poems published in the local newspapers which were dedicated to Bung Karno's teachings and others such as Ngurah Parsua's *Anak Marhaen*,[54]

51 For discussion of the overseas arts missions and the participation of Balinese artists, see Jennifer Lindsay and Irawati Durban Ardjo in this volume.

52 'Memperkuat ideology Marhaenism adjaran Bung Karno pada pekerdja2 kebudajaan'. See 'Pekan festival LKN success; Penggugah, penggerak, pelandjut dalam bidang kreasi', *Suluh Marhaen,* 26-7-1966.

53 'Hasil2 keputusan konperda V LKN Bali; Tentang politik kebudajaan', *Suluh Marhaen,* 24-7-1966.

54 *Suara Indonesia,* 7-5-1966.

and Putu Widjaja's *Salam bulan Djuni*[55] (Welcome June) which was written for the occasion of Soekarno's 65th birthday. By this time, however, Soekarno had been stripped of power, both unofficially and officially.

In addition, LKN Bali also held gamelan festivals. This festival was not a new idea as festivals of this kind had been held in Bali in the 1930s. The difference was that in the 1930s, the gamelan festival was sponsored by the local rajas, whereas in the 1960s it was organized by LKN and other organizations, such as the government-sponsored cultural organization, Madjelis Pertimbangan dan Pembinaan Kebudajaan (LISTIBIYA, Council for the Evaluation and Development of Culture). These festivals were usually attended by representatives of LKN at district or village level depending upon the level of the competition. The active role of LKN in Bali and its subordinate organizations from 1959 until the end of the 1960s enlivened the world of the arts and cultural life in Bali through a time of great political upheaval and social trauma. LKN Bali deserves credit for initiating the popularity of *drama gong*, which lasted from the late 1960s to the early 1990s.

Unlike LEKRA, LKN was never formally banned by the government. The former leader of the Central LKN, Sitor Situmorang, was jailed between 1967-1974 in the wake of the events of September-October 1965, but in Bali no prominent members of LKN were arrested. However as an organization, LKN gradually disappeared, in line with the policy of the New Order government to separate arts and culture from politics. Nowadays, some former members of LKN Bali, like Gde Dharna, Ngurah Parsua and Arthanegara, still produce works of literature and publish them in newspapers or book form, either in Balinese or Indonesian. Arthanegara recently published his first novel, *Dunia kampus yang lain* (Another campus world) (2007), a story about the experience of the author when he was studying in Beijing in the mid-1960s. Like the poems and short stories by Arthanegara in the 1960s, this novel also expresses a strong sense of nationalism. The narrator (who represents the voice of the author) decides to leave Beijing to return to Indonesia after he is told that the Communists were behind the September 1965 coup attempt. An interesting aspect of the novel is that it looks at the 1965 coup from the perspective of Indonesian students, diplomats and permanent residents who were in the People's Republic of China at that time (Darma Putra 2007). Although Arthanegara and other

55 *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 12-7-1966.

writers are no longer engaged in creative work as members of LKN or other arts and cultural organizations, and thus feel no obligation to voice the social and political agenda of a particular organization as they did in the past, their works are still inspired by a spirit of nationalism and heroism even though the contexts are not necessarily the same as the background to their works of the 1950s and 1960s.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This essay departs from the framework of nationally-oriented studies of cultural institutions in Indonesia in the period of the 1950s and 1960s by giving specific attention to the regional branches of LKN Bali and their cultural activities. Study of LKN is particularly interesting because its regional branches predated the existence of the Central LKN, and studying their activities reveals other aspects of cultural relations between region and 'centre' than those with which we are familiar from studies of LEKRA, for example. Regionally-focused study of LKN is also important because it enriches our understanding of the way the highly politicized climate of cultural activity in Indonesia at this time was as much a product of interactions between competing groups at the local level as it was the product of tensions at the national level.

LKN already existed as a cultural institution in Bali in the mid-1950s. However, it became more active and politically-engaged in the early 1960s following the PNI's growing awareness of its potential for harnessing political support through cultural activities, in the same way that LEKRA was seen to be doing for the PKI. The dynamic growth of LKN Bali evolved out of three significant developments: first, access to the ideas and renewed energy that followed the re-establishment of LKN Bali as part of the Central LKN at the Solo Congress in 1959; second, the growing nationalist fever of this period, especially after President Soekarno declared the 'Ganyang Malaysia' campaign in 1963; and third, the power struggle that erupted between the two dominant political parties in Bali, the PNI and PKI, which extended to their affiliated cultural organizations, LKN and LEKRA respectively. Considering the frequent injunctions by President Soekarno and the leaders of PNI for the Indonesian people to dedicate themselves to the completion of the national revolution, the cultural activities of LKN Bali, and presumably also elsewhere in Indonesia, were

highly preoccupied with social and political propaganda, rather than the development of art forms as such. In addition, newspaper editors encouraged writers to contribute to the completion of the revolution through their work. There was clear textual relationship between themes of political speech, performing arts and literary discourse.

The existence of LKN Bali enlivened the cultural activities on the island because members of the organization enthusiastically used a variety of traditional and modern art forms, literature and performing arts, to express the veritable fever of nationalistic sentiment that was fired by the ideological rhetoric and political campaigns of the period. Writers, actors and other cultural activists devoted their full attention to national issues and the projection of a sense of being Indonesian, leaving them with little room to express local issues of Balinese culture and identity. However, as is evident in their use of traditional performing arts such *janger* and *drama gong*, Balinese culture was an intrinsic part of their expression of Indonesian national culture.

In Bali, LKN and LEKRA were generally in conflict, even though they found common ground on some particular issues. LKN members' reaction to the Cultural Manifesto is a case in point, when members initially supported the Manifesto, but were later instructed by the central organization to join LEKRA in opposing it. Support for Soekarno's 'Ganyang Malaysia' propaganda campaign is another example of LKN and LEKRA sharing a common political stance. In the context of religion, however, LKN and LEKRA stood sharply opposed, with the former's endorsement of Pancasila implying an acceptance of 'belief in God', while LEKRA was perceived to support atheism, or at least LKN portrayed it in this way.

Unlike in other parts of Indonesia, in Bali LKN was at least as strong, if not stronger than LEKRA. The conflict between the two organizations, rather than being purely ideological was primarily politically motivated in accordance with the ambitions of the PNI and PKI respectively. Both wanted to tie their affiliated cultural bodies to party-political programs. The case of LKN Bali shows that in studying the cultural organizations of this period, it is important that we do not see any one of them in isolation. The relationships between organizations influenced their approaches to culture and their cultural activities at this time – and these relationships were different in different places in Indonesia.

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1972 *Pertumbuhan, perkembangan dan kejatuhan LEKRA di Indonesia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
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13

Creating culture for the new nation
South Sulawesi, 1950-1965

Barbara Hatley

South Sulawesi might seem at first a less than promising site for exploring Indonesian cultural activities during the 1950s and 1960s. Given the reportedly low level of pre-war education and nationalist organization in the region (Harvey 1977:21) and the fact that it remained part of the Dutch-created Negara Indonesia Timur (NIT, State of Eastern Indonesia) until the end of 1950, one might expect that there was less involvement here in the developing modern, Indonesian national culture than in other parts of Indonesia, less interaction with the major centres of activity in Java. More importantly, during the 1950s Sulawesi was the site of two regional rebellions, the Darul Islam revolt of Kahar Muzzakar in the south, commencing in 1950, and the PERMESTA rebellion of 1957 centred mainly in the north. Problems of political instability, lack of security and social and economic disruption seem likely to have impacted severely on the energy and resources available for cultural activities.

However, precisely because our understanding of cultural life in this period has so far been dominated by attention to the national capital and Java, because it has been assumed that little cultural activity occurred in more distant, contested regions such as Sulawesi, it is important to test such preconceptions, to investigate what was actually happening in these areas. So, although my own previous research on Indonesian literature and performance has been Java-based, here I have taken up the challenge of exploring cultural life in South Sulawesi in the 1950s and early 1960s. Armed with some very useful contacts provided by colleagues, I made brief trips to Makassar in 2008 and 2009, and sought out relevant newspaper holdings in Australian libraries. The picture presented below of is necessarily limited and partial, in keeping with my restricted time and resources. But it reveals a lively cultural scene at odds with previous expectations, and confirms the vital importance of local research for a full understanding of activities across the regions during this time.

PRESUMPTIONS DISPELLED

In Makassar I had the great good fortune to be introduced immediately to a man who has contributed invaluably to this research, Mohammad Anis Kaba. In the mid-1950s when he was in his early teens, Pak Anis[1] became an active, enthusiastic participant in the artistic and cultural life of Makassar. From that time onwards he has documented cultural developments in South Sulawesi, creating an extensive archive of materials – books, programs of plays and art exhibitions, copies of literary bulletins, newspaper cuttings. Several rooms of his house are filled with ceiling-high bookshelves housing boxes of papers; on the walls are displayed paintings, photos of famous national figures, local artists and friends, and posters from old play productions and poetry readings. Anis Kaba and several old friends who called by his home to consult his archive or just to chat, instantly dispelled any misconception that cultural life in South Sulawesi in the 1950s may have been low key or lacking in public attention and support. They talked of play performances and drama festivals, as well as poetry readings, and art exhibitions, and of literary bulletins and newspaper cultural supplements as media for publishing their poems and short stories. Anis produced booklets and clippings illustrating these accounts. Later, consultation of library holdings of newspapers from that period, mainly the Makassar daily newspaper *Marhaen*, confirmed this picture of busy artistic activity.[2] In the following pages I trace various elements of this dynamic cultural scene, outlined in roughly chronological order from the late 1940s onwards. Then I attempt to suggest what factors may have produced and sustained it.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN NIT TIMES

Already in the late 1940s, when Makassar was still capital of the Negara Indonesia Timur (NIT), there is evidence of considerable attention to cultural activity from state authorities, and enthusiastic involvement by artists and intellectuals. A booklet produced in

1 In my personal interactions with Anis Kaba I use the respectful 'Pak Anis' (*Pak* meaning literally 'Father'); in other contexts I cite his full name. Henceforth, for the purposes of this essay in English, I will use his name without the 'Pak'.

2 I was able to access the holdings, unfortunately very limited, of South Sulawesi newspapers at the Monash University library and the National Library of Australia. At Monash there are issues of *Pandji Negara* and of *Harian Marhaen* from 1955-1959 and at the National Library copies of *Sulawesi, Madjallah Kebudajaan*, 1958-1960.

1949, entitled *Jajasan Pusat Kebudajaan Indonesia Timur* (The Foundation for the Cultural Centre of Eastern Indonesia), announces the establishment of this foundation on 5 March 1949. The booklet explains, in Indonesian and Dutch, that the foundation is to be government-subsidized, administered by a group of civil servants and private citizens, and charged with fostering cultural activities in the fields of reading, painting and sculpture, music, film and incidental activities. Its location will be in Fort Rotterdam, where a library, museum, exhibition space, concert hall and meeting rooms are to be established. Outreach activities, such as the provision of reading materials and the holding of literacy courses, will be extended to other areas. The booklet opens with a quote from the speech of President Sukawati, Head of the State of Eastern Indonesia, at the foundation's launching: 'No society will endure unless it is supported by spiritual strength grounded in rich cultural skills.'[3] It goes on to define the foundation's aims as assisting the citizens of Eastern Indonesia to appreciate and promote their own cultures and to learn and absorb from others (*Jajasan* 1949:7). On the last point we hear the exuberant words of J.E. Tatengkeng (1907-1968), a well-known pre-war poet, at this time Minister of Education in the NIT government:

> The Foundation must have connections with Leiden and Amsterdam, with Paris and London, with New York and Sydney, with Cairo and New Delhi. Accept from there what is missing in you and donate part of what is yours. In this way our Foundation will reach its goals, of becoming a centre for the cultivation of established cultures, the building of new cultures and the coming together of the cultures of the world.[4]

While links with Holland clearly were important – the Director of the Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking (STICUSA, The Dutch Foundation for Cultural Co-operation) discussed in Liesbeth Dolk's paper in this volume, was present at the founding of the foundation and promised extensive support – the notion of Eastern Indonesia as a hub of international cultural connections seems highly fanci-

3 'Tidak ada masjarakat jang kekal, djika ia tidak didukung oleh kekuatan batin, jang timbul dari ketjerdasan kebudajaan jang tinggi' (*Jajasan* 1949:5).

4 […] Jajasan ini harus berhubungan dengan Leiden dan Amsterdam, dengan Paris dan London, dengan New York dan Sydney, dengan Cairo dan Delhi. Terimalah disana apa jang kurang padamu dan berikanlah sebagian dari milikmu. Dengan djalan begitu jajasan kita ini akan mentjapai maksudnja mendjadi centrum, mendjadi pusat pemeliharaan kebudajaan lama, mendjadi pusat pembangunan kebudajaaan baru, mendjadi pusat pertemuan kebudajaan dunia (*Jajasan* 1949:12).

ful. However, in the field of Indonesian national culture, there is evidence of busy development. *Pandji Negara*, a weekly newspaper founded in 1948 and produced by the NIT Department of Information, included a cultural segment titled *Budaja*. A few articles on historical topics and traditional cultures appeared in these pages – relations between the kings of Luwu and the surrounding peoples, Torajan funeral ceremonies, the influence of Bugis-Makassar customs on the Chinese residents of South Sulawesi. But the main emphasis is on national Indonesian cultural forms – poetry and short stories, articles on literature, reviews of recently published Indonesian novels and translated works and theatre performances.[5]

A June 1949 *Budaja* segment, for example, contains a short report and photo of an allegorical drama, in which characters representing Art and Religion bring together the quarrelling figures of Imagination and Reality. In an introductory speech the play is described as 'a symbol of our growing unity, which is born from the resources of our glorious culture'.[6] In mid-November 1949, there is a report of the recent staging of another allegorical play, *Deru* (Thunder), written by A.S. Salman and produced by Panitia Pembangunan Tugu Pahlawan (The Committee for the Construction of a Heroes Monument), where figures such as nationhood, intellectual strength and wealth unite to defend a beleaguered Ibu Pertiwi, goddess of the soil and the Indonesian nation. Previous performances of plays by the same writer are also mentioned, *Terus terang* (Straightforward) and *Terompet* (Trumpet), staged respectively by a student group from the town of Bone and a Muslim scouting organization. The *Budaja* sections of the two following issues contain reviews of plays staged on 19-20 November and 4 December 1949, realistic dramas set in the context of contemporary military struggle and social instability, highlighting themes of moral conflict. The first, *Aku gantinja* (I replace him) about a spy who infiltrates a guerrilla band, was staged by a group Seni Budaja Makassar (Makassar Arts and Culture). The second, *Peperangan antara dua aliran* (Battle between two streams), produced by Serikat Islam

5 The Indonesian books reviewed include several novels with Minangkabau settings, republications by the Dutch firm Der Brug of books first published by Balai Pustaka before the war, Achdiat Kartamihardja's *Atheis*, and an analysis of the Pudjangga Baru literary movement by Takdir Alisjahbana. Two translated works are *Don Quixote* and Kahil Gibran's *The prophet*. There is also a review of De Graaf's Dutch language *Geschiedenis van Indonesia*.

6 '[p]erlambang persatuan kita jang sedang tumbuh, – ialah jang lahir dari sumber-sumber kebudajaan kita jang gilang-gemilang', *Pandji Negara*, 5-6-1949. The speech-maker is a Professor Dr Hanrath, Head of the Kunstkring Makasar and a member of the board of the Panti Pengetahuan Umum, the Institute of General Knowledge. J.E. Tatengkeng, the NIT Minister of Education, and the head of parliament, Sultan Kaharuddin, are identified as audience members in the photo. I received a copy of this page from Liesbeth Dolk via Jennifer Lindsay: many thanks to both for their assistance.

Indonesia Afdeling Pandu (the Pandu section of the Muslim organization Sarikat Islam), depicts conflict between two brothers, one who supports the colonial, feudal status quo, the other who champions the cause of the ordinary people.[7] Besides summarizing the plays, the writers of the reviews also critique aspects of plot, characterization and staging – commenting on instances of psychologically unconvincing acting, poorly conceived scene treatment or inappropriate lighting; praising a skilful, realistic fighting scene. Clearly the Western-derived model of modern drama, employing written scripts and standard stage conventions, was already a familiar one in South Sulawesi at that time. Groups of various backgrounds staged performances. And the role of plays as a medium to comment on social issues and strengthen moral values and promote nationalist ideals was well entrenched.

Of the poems and short stories appearing in *Budaja*, some address social and political issues, while many focus on themes of love and personal feeling. Literary articles include praise for some local writers, but also criticism of poor language construction and declining poetic skills. Several commentators protest against such negativity, arguing that the enthusiasm and dynamism of young writers needs to be nurtured not discouraged. For the world is on the move and Indonesia is moving too, taking advantage of the opportunities of freedom. One writer praises the achievements of Java-based figures such as Chairil Anwar and Achdiat Kartamihardja, and challenges the writers of Indonesia Timur to match them (Sjarief Saleh 1949). There is a strong sense of involvement in a shared Indonesian endeavour in developing literature and the arts.

CULTURAL LIFE AND POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT IN MAKASSAR IN THE 1950S

After Sulawesi was officially integrated into the Republic of Indonesia in August 1950, the forms and structures of national cultural activity established in the preceding years seem to have expanded and flourished. Several of the numerous daily newspapers published in Makassar maintained weekly cultural segments.[8] These published fiction and poetry, literary criticism, book reviews and reports on local performances and arts events as well as cultural

7 *Pandji Negara* 20, 21 November 1949.

8 A list of Makassar-based newspapers obtained from Pak Anis' archives, dating from the mid-1950s, contains 10 names: *Pedoman Rakjat, Harian Marhaen, Tindjauan, Kurier dari Makassar, Berita Baru, Sulawesi Bergolak, Chia Sing Pao, Daily Telegraph, Kantor Berita Antara* and *Koresponden PIA.*

developments elsewhere in Indonesia; they also supported play productions and discussions. The one example I have been able to access fairly systematically, *Lembaga*, the cultural supplement of the daily *Marhaen*, gives an impression of lively local activities and keen interest in the wider world.[9] At the same time, newspaper sources convey a sense of busy activity in the field of popular entertainment, broadening the picture gained of more formal cultural structures.

POPULAR PASTIMES

Popular entertainment in Makassar during the 1950s resembles Marije Plomp's description of the city Medan at this time, albeit on a smaller scale.[10] Numerous cinemas showed American as well as Malay, Indian, Chinese and Indonesian-made films. In 1955 at least eight cinemas were operating in Makassar, each with three or four sessions daily. A column listing their programs in the newspapers each day sat next to large advertisements of particular shows featuring striking photos – an elegant Grace Kelly in *The country girl*, Ava Gardner provocatively tempting Humphrey Bogart in *The barefoot contessa* and embracing Robert Taylor in *The knights of the Round Table*, a brooding Alan Ladd in *The black knight*, and a cast of thousands in Arabic-attire in an epic *Belal*, described as 'the first and biggest history of Islam'.[11] Hollywood films predominated, promoted with much fanfare (for instance, full-page newspaper advertisements for a six-day 'Universal-International' film festival at the Empress cinema, including *The Glenn Miller story*, *Magnificent obsession*, *So this is Paris* and *Creature of the Black Lagoon*), along with some Indian films and a few Malay productions. By the end of the decade offerings appear more varied; while American films are still the most numerous, there are occasional Chinese, Japanese and Filipino movies as well as Indonesian-made classics such as Usmar Ismail's *Tiga dara*, *Terang di bulan*, *Terang di kali* and *Kunanti di Djokja*.

The programs of the state-owned radio station, Radio Republik Indonesia, as published in the daily papers, demonstrate an eclectic variety. Fridays are marked by early morning Koranic chanting, the midday sermon from the main Makassar mosque broadcast live,

9 The segment is subtitled 'Notes sastera dan budaya' (Notes on literature and culture). Use of the English word 'notes' may suggest a conscious cosmopolitanism.

10 Plomp reports in her contribution to this volume that Medan had sixteen movie theatres at this time, while many bands and singers making broadcasts on Medan radio enjoyed popularity also in Malaya and appeared in Malay movies.

11 *Harian Marhaen*, 8-12-1955.

and Arabian style *gambus* or *kasidah* music.[12] A sample Saturday program in early 1955 includes Chinese, Moluccan and Javanese *keroncong* music, the intriguingly-titled 'Juke box Saturday night' and a direct broadcast of entertainment from the Panti Hiburan theatre building;[13] a Sunday program from 1956 mentions a Catholic talk, a Protestant church service, sung devotions by a Pentecostal singing group and *seriosa* and *keroncong* music.[14] Musical programs formed the core of radio offerings, presented by the resident orchestra, Orkes Radio Makassar, and by local groups such as Pemuda Maluku (Moluccan Youth) and the Badjiminasa orchestra, specialists in modern Makassarese song.[15] Competitions to select star radio performers, held each year to mark Radio Day on 11 September, with Makassar region winners potentially going on to compete at the national level, were an important focus of attention.[16]

Visits by touring artists from Jakarta and overseas were another way in which popular entertainment in Makassar interacted with a wider world. The Pekan Raya Ekonomi II, the Second Grand Economics Fair, in August 1956, for example, involved 70 participants in a show touring from Jakarta described (in English) as 'The Great Travelling Carnival Show', and 36 acrobats from Beijing, sponsored in part by the local and national branches of the Chinese-Indonesian friendship association. Crowds were estimated to number 60,000-70,000 per night.[17] Along with popular entertainment, news stories also could draw Makassar residents into imaginative involvement with the wider world. The ill-fated love affair between the British royal family's Princess Margaret and divorced commoner Group Captain Townsend is frequently mentioned, for example, in the newspapers of 1955. Accounts of actions by *gerombolan* (Darul Islam rebels), including the killing of 100 villagers and disruption to the holding of elections, share newspaper space with updates on the romance and an analysis prompted by the affair of the disruptive role of romantic love through the ages.[18] Immediate hardship and suffering apparently did not impede interest in and empathy with distant lives.[19]

12 *Harian Marhaen*, 2-12-1955, 28-12-1955.
13 *Harian Marhaen*, 5-1-1955.
14 *Harian Marhaen*, 4-8-1956.
15 *Harian Marhaen*, 1-12-1955, 17-12-1955, 28-12-1955.
16 *Harian Marhaen*, 19-7-1955, 15-9-1956.
17 *Harian Marhaen*, 10-8-1955, 13-8-1955, 29-8-1956.
18 *Harian Marhaen*, 10-11-1955.
19 Some suggest that the effect is just the opposite, that hardship increases the appeal of pleasurable distractions. See Marije Plomp's observation in her essay in this volume on similarities between the thriving popular culture of Medan in tough economic times during the 1950s and the popularity of cabarets, films and soccer games in the Netherlands during World War II.

CULTURAL FORMS AND STRUCTURES

The year 1955, the year of Indonesia's first elections, was a time of busy growth in arts structures and activities in Makassar. The daily *Marhaen*, connected with the PNI nationalist party, began publishing in 1955 a cultural segment *Lembaga*, which focuses on Indonesian culture as shared, national cultural expression, informed by and open to international developments. The 19 October issue presents a report of the painter Affandi's recent successful international tour of Europe, analysing the strengths of his work and highlighting Affandi's observation that he didn't meet many great European artists, while Indonesia has ten artists of international standing.[20] The next edition contains a positive discussion of the musical form *keroncong*, as national music that can be enjoyed by Indonesians of all regions, now free of its past shady associations and appearing in respectable contexts such as radio competitions.[21] The following week a writer warns of the dangers of intimate, Western-style dancing for young people. While not advocating a ban on such dancing, not wanting to keep young people old-fashioned but rather to embrace the modern world, he sees the need for some control.[22] Elsewhere in the same edition appear reports of the establishment in Jakarta of a committee to study Malay-Polynesian languages, of a coming play performance in the city of Medan and the award of the Nobel Prize for literature to Icelandic writer Halldor Killjan Laxness.[23]

The *Lembaga* of 10 November 1955 turns attention to a key local event, the Festival Senidrama Indonesia I, the first Indonesian drama festival. Commencing that day and continuing until the first week in December, the event is described as the first drama festival in the history of Indonesian theatre. After suggesting that Makassar cultural leaders can be justly proud of this achievement, the writer criticizes government bodies and private donors for failing to properly support the event. He/she then goes on to explain its aims – to increase public interest in theatre as a very important medium combining other art forms, such as literature, music and visual arts, to raise the standards of performance, and to overcome the previously poor social reputation of theatre and its performers.[24]

20 There are also some poems on battle themes commemorating Armed Forces Day and a short story *Sebelum bulan baru datang* (Before the new moon comes) by A. Rosady Sany (*Lembaga* 1-33 in *Harian Marhaen*, 19-10-1955).

21 *Lembaga* 1-34 in *Harian Marhaen*, 26-10-1955.

22 *Lembaga* 1-35 in *Harian Marhaen*, 3-11-1955.

23 The report states that the performing group Keluarga Tunas Medan is to stage the play *Diriku tak ada*.

24 *Lembaga* 1-36 in *Harian Marhaen*, 10-11-1955.

Other sources confirm the prominence of the festival in the cultural life of the time. Whatever the significance of the reported lack of practical assistance from government bodies, verbal expressions of support from official figures were expansive. The acting governor of South Sulawesi, Andi Boerhaddin, in his opening speech for the festival describes the event as an expression of the progress of the Indonesian people, in not only achieving political independence but also reviving the noble spirit of Indonesian culture, which had been obscured by the influence of colonialism. He also strongly emphasizes the educative role of drama. The Commander of the Armed Forces, J.F. Warouw, likewise speaks of restoring the beauty and grandeur of Indonesian culture, and expresses his great pride in the holding of the festival, which provides evidence to those outside Sulawesi of the security and advancement of the region.[25] Two of the organizers, Andi Sapada Mappangile, head of the festival committee, and Andi Baso Amier, the publicity officer,[26] cite the aims of the festival as developing and raising the standard of drama, as an important part of national culture, and providing an attraction for the public, described as thirsty and lonely ('*haus dan sepi*'), because of the conditions around them.[27] Eight groups participated in the festival. These included a group called Tifa (a term for a small drum) that represented the cultural supplement of the newspaper *Pedoman Rakjat*; Lembaga Seni Film dan Drama (LESFIRA , Institute of Film and Dramatic Art) a Makassar-based film and drama organization; and Peladjar Seni Drama (PELSEDRA, Drama Students' Group), a group of drama students from the town of Pare-Pare.[28] The performances are listed as three domestic dramas, three plays with a nationalistic background and one adaptation of a traditional legend about love and heroism.[29] All are described as realistic in style (Fahmi Syariff, n.d.: 32).

25 These statements appear in a commemorative booklet for the festival, a photocopied version of which I obtained from Anis Kaba.

26 Andi Sapada Mappangile was a prominent cultural figure, the husband of Ibu Andi Nurhani Sapada, the famous dance choreographer; both are discussed below. Andi Nurhani herself also participated in the organization of the drama festival. Andi Baso Amier was a prolific and acclaimed writer and cultural organizer.

27 The comments by Andi Sapada and Andi Baso Amier are quoted in Fahmi Syariff (n.d.:31). The comment on difficult social conditions for the people of Makassar seems likely to refer to the disruption caused by the Darul Islam rebellion, among other hardships. Such issues generally find little mention in the arts and literature sections of newspapers and reports of cultural activities, although they are reported regularly in other pages of the newspapers.

28 The other groups mentioned are Ikatan Penggemar Seni Indonesia (IPSI, League of Indonesian Art Lovers), Tjenderawasih, Pertip, H.K.I. Sehati and Mekar. Unfortunately I have not been able to find out the full names of the organizations Pertip and HKI Sehati.

29 One play is missing from the list as there is no documentation available.

Other cultural activities taking place in Makassar in 1955 included a painting exhibition and a music festival or Pesta Seni-Suara held on 13-14 December, shortly after the Drama Festival reviewed above. Both were organized by the Makassar branch of Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture), which had been established in April 1955.[30] An article in *Lembaga* in late December comments on the lively state of the arts scene and the growing confidence of artists. The writer then discusses the music festival, praising its focus on local popular songs and their composers, as an expression of the culture of ordinary people.[31] Given the bitter ideological clashes in later years between LEKRA and other cultural groups, the positive reports of the art exhibition and music festival in newspapers of this time are noteworthy. Government officials were also supportive. J.E. Tatengkeng, by then Head of the Department of Culture of the Province of Sulawesi, spoke at the art exhibition, expressing his appreciation and looking forward to future collaboration: the Acting Governor of Sulawesi, the Mayor of Makassar and the Department of Culture contributed to the prizes for the competitions at the music festival.[32]

Subsequent years saw ongoing activities in national literary, performing and visual arts. The literary supplements of the newspapers continued to publish poetry and short stories along with discussions, sometimes heated, of issues such as a perceived crisis in literature and problems in the teaching of literature in schools[33] or the function of the artist in society.[34] A second drama festival was held in June 1957 and a theatre conference in November 1958:[35] a theatre academy, Lembaga Akademi Seni Drama Indonesia (LASDI, Institute for the Indonesian Academy of Drama), was established in March 1959. Among the plays staged in 1959 were two performances of *Terlalu gelap diluar* (Too dark outside) written by local theatre figure Rachman Arge, who also took the leading role. The second show, in particular, which was presented 'in the round' and described as the first arena-style production in

30 The founding of LEKRA's Makassar branch, on 6 April 1955 is mentioned in the cultural news (Berita Kebudajaan) section of *Budaya* 4-4/5 (April/May1955):240.

31 *Lembaga* 1-42 in *Harian Marhaen*, 27-12-1955.

32 *Harian Marhaen*, 16-1-1956.

33 *Lembaga* 2-46, 47 in *Harian Marhaen*, 24-1-1956 and 31-1-1956.

34 *Lembaga* 3-18 in *Minggu Marhaen*, 4-5-1957.

35 The conference was intended to involve theatre practitioners and devotees from whole of Eastern Indonesia. Unfortunately, transport problems prevented representatives from Kalimantan and elsewhere from attending, so that only Sulawesi-based groups were present. Nevertheless the numbers were impressive – 29 groups attended from Makassar alone. See *Sulawesi* 1-4 (December 1958).

South Sulawesi (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:55), attracted much interest and critical commentary.[36] Arge and another, somewhat younger performer-dramatist-director, Aspar Paturusi, were becoming established at this time; both went on to became famous figures on the national theatre scene. A number of arts/literature organizations sponsored theatre productions, amongst their other activities. These included Seniman Kota Besar Makassar (Artists of the City of Makassar), Fron Seniman Makassar (FRONSEMA, Makassar Artists' Front) and Gelora Seni dan Budaya Anak Sekarang (GESAS, The Spirit of Contemporary Youth in Art and Culture).

Meanwhile, according to the accounts of Anis Kaba and his friends, the most active and well-organized arts association during these years was centred in the town of Pare-Pare north of Makassar, with a membership of high school students. In April 1957, the Organisasi Seniman Muda (ORSENIM, Organization of Young Artists) was founded in Pare-Pare among senior high school students and other young people all under twenty years of age. Initially it focused specifically on drama and literature, but soon sections for sculpture, painting, dance, martial arts (*pencak silat)*, singing and music were also added. Salim Said (b. 1943), later to become prominent in culture and politics at the national level, headed the literature section. The initial motto of the group, *Seni untuk seni* (art for art's sake) attracted criticism for being too 'individualistic'; it was quickly changed to 'We devote our Art to society, because art is a mirror of society'.[37] A regular stencilled bulletin was produced, titled simply ORSENIM, containing poems, short stories and essays by members as well as reports of poetry readings and arts events. In March 1959, a branch of ORSENIM was set up in Makassar, at the initiative of Anis Kaba who became secretary of the organization.[38] Later branches were established also in Gowa, Bone, Barru, Pinrang and Lengga.

My informants explained the dynamism of cultural activities in Pare-Pare in terms of the prosperity of the town as a trading centre, particularly in copra. As the profits from illegal trade in copra, evading central government restrictions, flowed to local government, military and business, the physical environment of the town

36 See three articles reviewing and critiquing the play in the cultural supplement *Lembaga* of *Harian Marhaen*, Sjafii Atmadja 1959; Harun Hasjid Djibe 1959; and Salman 1959.

37 Kami mengabdikan Seni untuk masjarakat karena seni adalah tjermin masjarakat.

38 Newspaper clippings and handwritten notes from Anis Kaba's collection indicate that he wrote to the central committee of ORSENIM in Pare-Pare in January 1959, on behalf of a group of students at SMP IV Makassar, requesting permission to establish a branch of the organization in Makassar. They received a letter giving them the mandate to do so. Anis Kaba was seventeen at the time; presumably his fellow students were of similar age.

flourished, and the arts benefited. Several government and military figures seem moreover to have been involved in the arts as organizers and instructors. Makassar, by comparison, was just establishing its new, post-independence governmental structure, the Dutch had just left and Darul Islam was causing disturbances. Strikingly, there is no mention, either in the accounts of my informants or in written sources, of the fact that ORSENIM was founded just a month after the declaration of the PERMESTA regional rebellion in March 1957. Although, like others, artists may have sympathized with the political grievances motivating the rebellion, in their creative work and cultural activities there is an unwavering sense of contributing to a single nation.[39] Perhaps it is for this reason that the social and political upheaval caused by the Darul Islam rebellion and the events and issues of PERMESTA find little explicit mention in their work.

INNOVATION IN TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE

While the main focus of this paper is modern Indonesian literature, theatre and popular entertainment, in keeping with the contacts I made in Makassar and the materials collected, one outstanding figure in the field of traditional arts must be mentioned – Andi Nurhani Sapada (1929-2010). I had the good fortune to meet her in 2008 when she was 79, and to hear of her experiences in modernizing and secularizing traditional dance with her innovative choreography. Andi Nurhani Sapada (her childhood name was Andi Nurhani Makkasau, Sapada is from her husband's name) was born of a noble family (reflected in her title 'Andi'), and educated in Dutch schools in Makassar and Ambon, where her grandfather was stationed as a civil servant. Returning to Makassar in 1946, still at the time of the Negara Indonesia Timur, she resumed her education. She recalls that her first contact with Sulawesi dance came about because some Dutch dignitaries were visiting the school and wished to see a 'traditional' dance performance. The wife of one of her teachers was a very good dancer, so she trained a group of six girls to perform, including the young Andi Nurhani Makkasau.

39 At least one important figure in arts and culture in Makassar took an active part in the PERMESTA rebellion. A. Moein, a leading journalist and newspaper editor, who was also prominent in drama, poetry writing and literary discussions, went in 1957 to Menado in North Sulawesi, where the PERMESTA government was centred. As head of the Pemuda PERMESTA Indonesia Timur (PERMESTA Youth of East Indonesia), he remained in Menado for five years, while at times publishing in the Makassar press under an assumed name (A. Moein, personal communication, June 2008).

In 1950, when President Soekarno visited Sulawesi and asked to see some traditional dance, Andi Nurhani was asked to prepare something, and staged a version of the *pattudu*, the traditional dance from the Mandar area that she had learnt with her teacher.[40]

The choreography for which Andi Nurhani Sapada is most famous is that of the *pakarena*, originally a lengthy ritual dance performed in villages and for Makassarese royalty. She reports that with her European education she knew nothing about traditional dance,[41] but set about learning it from village experts in 1951. A specific motivation was the visit to Sulawesi of a group of performers from Yogyakarta who visited that year to learn local dance and music. She speaks of summoning two musicians, Fachruddin Daeng Romo and Mappaselleng Daeng Maggau, experts in *pakarena* drumming style, along with a troupe of dancers, and working with them and the group from Yogyakarta for three days straight.

Another stimulus for working with the *pakarena* was the fact that she was asked each year to present this dance at the Independence Day celebrations in the presidential palace (Istana Negara) in Jakarta. Not many provinces were invited, she suggests, but her *pakarena* performance, representing the province of Sulawesi, was always included. Fearing that the same dance repeated each year might become monotonous, in 1955-1956 she started making small changes, beginning with the colours of the dancers' costumes. While red had traditionally been used for commoners and green for aristocrats, she started using these colours with no connections to the dancers' status, and introduced other hues as well, for variation and to make an attractive composition. '*Saya main warna*', 'I played with colours', she says. Her family were unhappy, asking why she allowed commoners to wear green. For beauty, for aesthetic reasons, she replied, to make performances dynamic rather than static and to prevent the dance form from dying.

During her visit to the palace, Andi Sapada reports, she often talked (in Dutch) with President Soekarno, and received valued advice from him about her dance performances. But she recalls an early occasion where his comments caused her considerable alarm and stress. As mentioned by Jennifer Lindsay in her contribution to this volume, Andi Sapada and a *pakarena* group representing

40 R. Anderson Sutton (2002:52-3), in his discussion of Andi Sapada's work identifies the dance as the *pattudu*. In speaking with me about the dance presented at her school and the performance for Soekarno, Andi Sapada didn't mention the name of the dance.

41 She had a keen interest in Western and Western-derived music, however. Sutton (2002:52) reports that she sang with an ensemble and on the radio in Makassar in the late 1940s, using an assumed name since it was inappropriate for a woman of aristocratic family to be an 'entertainer'.

Sulawesi were included in the Indonesian cultural mission to the People's Republic of China in 1954. Before departure, the performing groups gathered at the presidential palace in Jakarta for final rehearsals. President Soekarno watched, and made comments on certain groups. Asking his view of the *pakarena* she heard that he considered it *kurang kompak*, not cohesive enough. 'How could we be *kompak*?' she asks. As traditional artists they knew nothing about such matters. The drummers followed a particular rhythm, but it had no codified structure; the dancers moved at their own slow pace. Looking at the dance she could see the need to change these elements and make it more interesting for audiences, but how was she to do that, alone in Jakarta with no one to talk to about such issues? What she did was to introduce a new drum beat, to mark the points where the dancers needed to change position. This strategy seems to have pleased or at least amused Soekarno; Andi Sapada reports that he laughed as he watched the second rehearsal. Later she evidently became much bolder in introducing changes to the *pakarena* form. Her innovations continued and developed over the decades, involving a dramatic shortening of the original length of the dance, and radical changes to its musical accompaniment (Sutton 2002:53-5). Reportedly not everyone was pleased with her innovations; some saw them as undermining the unique identity and artistry of the original form. But today all acknowledge her huge contribution to the development of the performing arts in South Sulawesi.[42]

Andi Sapada spoke proudly of her participation in the Independence Day celebrations, and of her experiences as a member of the cultural mission to China in 1954. The innovative creativity and enthusiastic openness to new influences described by Jennifer Lindsay among members of the cultural missions, and by Irawati Durban Ardjo among West Javanese dancers who participated both in these missions and in Soekarno's Independence Day celebrations, are strongly echoed in Andi Sapada's experience. In addition to her creative activities, she was also active in dance education. With the assistance of her husband, Andi Sapada Mappangile, whom she had married in 1950, Andi Sapada founded a network of dance

42 Sutton observes that the drummers who worked closely with Andi Sapada, namely Fachruddin Daeng Romo and Mappaselleng Daeng Maggau, although not always agreeing with the changes that Andi Sapada and her followers introduced, endorsed the benefit of broadening the appeal of Makasssarese arts. He cites the views of Daeng Romo, who described how the original music of *pakarena*, involving soulful singing and thunderous drumming, had 'expressed the strong, extroverted ideal of Makassarese masculinity' as contrasted with 'the essence of composure' embodied by the almost motionless female dancers (Sutton 2002:54). In the new version of the *pakarena* this contrast was no longer emphasized: the role of the musicians was reduced and muted and the dancers were more active and deliberately alluring.

schools, the Institut Kesenian Sulawesi (Sulawesi Arts Institute) where her creations and approach to dance were taught. Her husband's position as a *bupati* (district head)[43] facilitated the founding of IKS branches in the majority of provincial districts, establishing an ongoing model for the practice of Sulawesi dance and its musical accompaniment. Andi Sapada's shortened and streamlined *pakarena*, in particular, became the dance form through which South Sulawesi represented itself to the nation and the world.

SOURCES OF ARTISTIC ENERGIES AND IDEALS?

Although the above account of cultural activities in South Sulawesi in the 1950s is necessarily partial and piecemeal, it reveals a picture of dynamism and energy clearly at odds with the suggestion that difficult political conditions may have dampened interest in cultural concerns. What factors motivated and shaped this lively cultural scene is a question for which I have no definitive answers, but can offer some conjectural thoughts.

One thing that stands out in conversing and reading about cultural activities in Sulawesi in the 1950s is the existence of an ethnically diverse, well-educated elite with a strong sense of artistic and nationalist mission. Some came from aristocratic families; most had either attended Dutch schools themselves or had Dutch-educated parents. Often such individuals were involved in several fields – in journalism and/or politics as well as cultural activities, and skilled in several art forms. The same names recur across time and in different capacities and combinations. These people knew one another, and collaborated together on various kinds of ventures. Some were or later became, nationally-renowned.

A figure mentioned several times above, for example, is J.E. Tatengkeng. Born in North Sulawesi in 1907, Tatengkeng had attended a Dutch primary school, then schools and colleges in Bandung and Solo, and became a well-known poet and member of the Pujangga Baru literary movement. In the late 1940s he held the positions of Minister of Education and Prime Minister of Negara Indonesia Timur [44] and by 1955 was Head of the Department of Arts

43 Sutton (2002:55) reports that Andi Sapada (Mappangile) was posted in 1960 as *bupati* (district head) to the district of Sidenreng-Rappang. He does not indicate whether this was his first appointment as *bupati*.

44 Tatengkeng is mentioned as Minister of Education in March 1949. He held the post of Prime Minister of NIT from 27 December 1949-14 March 1950. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Engelbert_Tatengkeng#Early_Life.

and Culture, for the province of Sulawesi.[45] Meanwhile, Tatengkeng continued to write literary works and contribute to cultural debates. In December 1955, for example, he was involved in an exchange about literature, philosophy and morality with the writer Salman A.S in the *Lembaga* cultural supplement, which also occasionally published his poems. And in September 1958 he launched a new monthly cultural magazine, *Sulawesi, Madjallah Kebudajaan*, of which he was chief editor, with an editorial board that comprised local writers and artists, and national figures such as Trisno Sumardjo and Gadis Rasjid of Jakarta and Njoman Pandji Tisna of Bali named as assistant editors. Trisno Sumardjo contributed a regular *Surat dari Djakarta* (Letter from Jakarta), about cultural developments in the capital: Tatengkeng published a short story about his traumatic first days in a Dutch primary school, and a one-act play, *Lena*, about an independent-minded young woman who leads a workers' strike (Tatengkeng 1958c, 1958b). Outlining the aims of the magazine in his introduction to the first issue, Tatengkeng speaks of providing a medium for creative artists and thinkers to convey their works to the public. The term 'Sulawesi' in the title is explained as a *penugasan*, the assignment of a task to the artists of Sulawesi to foster this new human life. The intent is not exclusive: in nurturing creative life in Sulawesi, Tatengkeng (1958a) writes, we are also building the world.

Like Tatengkeng, Henk Rondonuwu was another Minahasan whose activities spanned many fields, including politics and the arts, and involved collaboration with a wide range of people. In 1947, Rondonuwu, together with two colleagues, an Ambonese and a Makassarese, co-founded the oldest ongoing newspaper in Makassar, *Pedoman Rakjat*. At the time of the 1955 drama festival, he appears as one of the organizers, along with Andi Sapada Mappangile, Andi Sapada herself, and J.E. Tatengkeng. Rondonowu (referred to with great warmth as Pak Henky by Pak Anis and his friends) was head of LESFIRA, the film and drama association. They report that he was also a central figure in LASDI, the Indonesian theatre academy, founded in 1959. As head of LESFIRA he was much involved in the making of the organization's first film, *Pradjurit tauladan* (The model soldier) in 1959, again in collaboration with Andi Sapada Mappangile who was one of the film's co-producers. The film, seen to contain useful educative material about civil-military relations, received strong military support; a high-ranking officer gave technical advice, and four battalions and several individual soldiers participated in the action.[46]

45 Sulawesi was a single province at that time. Separate provinces of North and South Sulawesi were established in September 1960 (Harvey 1977:415).

46 *Sulawesi* 1-7 (March 1959):308.

Among local Bugis-Makassarese figures, Andi Sapada and her husband stand out. With their skills and energy, they made much of the opportunities and connections opened up by their aristocratic family backgrounds and Dutch education to develop and promote new cultural forms. While Andi Sapada's activities lay mainly in the field of traditional dance, her husband's interests ranged more broadly, and both were prominent, widely-connected public figures. A different model is provided by Salim Said, growing up in a wealthy business family, taking a leading role in youthful literary activities in his home city, then moving on to Jakarta and the wider international world as a journalist, academic, military analyst, film expert and diplomat. A number of other figures I met experienced less illustrious careers, but nevertheless had been influential in a range of cultural fields. A painter and illustrator, Ali Walgandi, now over eighty and walking with a stick, a frequent visitor to Anis Kaba's house, spoke of his involvement in theatre as well as visual arts. Indeed he is mentioned as the director of the production *Terlalu gelap diluar* the first play presented in the round in Sulawesi (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:55), and as a contributor to other performances. He organized and exhibited in an art exhibition sponsored by LASDI in May 1959, and he appears on the editorial board of J.E. Tatengkeng's cultural magazine *Sulawesi*, which published many of his sketches.

A shared motivation for these activities seems to be a sense of duty and a desire to contribute culturally to a new era – J.E. Tatengkeng's talk of assigning tasks to artists, Andi Sapada's wish to revitalize traditional dance for today. There was encouragement and support from official sources, from government and military officials who saw lively cultural activity as both entertaining and edifying local people and signalling to the outside world the stability and progress of their region. Rather than impeding involvement in the building of a new national culture, the establishment of the Negara Indonesia Timur, which built up the importance of Makassar as a regional centre, and brought together people from different regions and backgrounds in its administration, arguably strengthened this role. Artists, writers and performers benefited from targeted facilities and gained enhanced confidence in the importance of their work.

Meanwhile, young people embraced arts activities enthusiastically as great fun. Newspapers of the 1950s contain announcement of *malam gembira*, literally 'nights of gaiety', evening concerts. Anis Kaba describes how these events were organized. He and his friends would look around for someone with a big yard where they could gather and drink tea; someone might give a lecture and there was always poetry-reading, music and dance. In addition to the exuber-

ant enjoyment of such evenings, there was an additional sense of *bagaimana kita ke depan*, 'where are we going, what are we contributing to the future?' When someone read a poem others would comment and criticize, and later the writer would publish the revised, improved version in one of the newspapers. In their enthusiasm to be involved in the arts, to have an outlet for their expression, young writers and activists would join in with whatever was happening; play productions, poetry readings, discussions. It made no difference who was doing the organizing, Anis Kaba reports – the Muhammadiyah Muslim organization, the Catholic church, a socialist-leaning newspaper. They published their writing in whichever newspaper would accept it. The newspapers, in turn, selected material on the basis of its content, not the affiliation of the writer.

Anis Kaba's account of youthful artistic activities resonates with my impression outlined above of the fluid involvements and varied collaborations of elite cultural figures. Interactions among participants in the South Sulawesi arts scene were certainly not always harmonious – acrimonious, personally targeted exchanges occur fairly frequently in the cultural segments of the newspapers. What is clear, however, is that certainly during the 1950s there was a sense of shared involvement in an enterprise with a common ideal and goal, that of creating Indonesian culture.

SOUTH SULAWESI AT THE TIME OF THE GREAT DIVIDE

Just how much that picture changed in the early 1960s in keeping with political developments and cultural shifts at the national level is something I have found very difficult to determine. Without regular newspaper holdings to consult,[47] only occasional clippings and some theatre programs, my main source has been the recollections of a small number of informants, shaped by their experiences on one point of the political spectrum. The following are some tentative thoughts, and ideas for further investigation.

Anis Kaba and his friends report on a general heightening of political consciousness and tightening of political affiliations after President Soekarno's Political Manifesto declaration of 1959. All arts and cultural organizations now felt the need for protection by affiliation with a political party, or other body located within the framework of

47 Library holdings of Sulawesi newspapers I've been able to consult in Australia do not go beyond 1960. Monash University library's issues of *Harian Marhaen* cease in 1959; the National Library of Australia's *Sulawesi, Madjallah Kebudajaan* holdings date from 1958 to 1960.

the state ideology of Nasionalisme, Agama, Komunisme (NASAKOM, Nationalism, Religion and Communism). In Makassar as elsewhere, Anis and friends report, the LKN (Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional, Institute of National Culture) was the PNI-linked cultural organization, LEKRA the communist-linked group, and Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia (LESBUMI, Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures) had Nahdlatul Ulama connections. The group Ikatan Seniman Budajawan Muhammadijah (ISBM, Muhammadiyah League of Artists and Cultural Figures), was also prominent. They describe Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam (HSBI, The Association for Islamic Arts and Culture), the modernist Islamic cultural organization discussed by Choirotun Chisaan in her essay in this volume, as present in Makassar but not particularly active. Newspapers too, had clear political connections. *Marhaen* intensified its links with the Jakarta PNI paper *Suluh Marhaen*; LKN maintained a weekly paper *Expres Minggu*; the paper most closely-identified with the Communist Party was *Pos Minggu Pagi*,[48] while Muhammadiyah was represented in Makassar by the Jakarta-based paper *Mertju Suar*. It was not until 1964, however, that positions hardened. Up until then, the formation of ad hoc cultural clusters and movement of writers and performers between groups pertained.[49] With the declaration of the Cultural Manifesto (Manifesto Kebudayaan, later derisively dubbed 'Manikebu') by a number of prominent independent writers in Jakarta in August 1963, its denunciation by the Left, subsequent banning by Soekarno and rejection by government-linked cultural organizations, antagonisms sharpened.

Newspaper reports of the time reflect the mood of confrontation.[50] An account in the communist-aligned Jakarta daily *Harian Rakjat* of 26 January 1964 of a meeting held in Makassar on 5 Janu-

48 Although sometimes speaking in terms that might imply that *Pos Minggu Pagi* was Communist-connected, Pak Anis and his friends explain that the newspaper and its editor were aligned with the leftist Indonesia Party (PARTINDO) rather than directly with the PKI or LEKRA.

49 Theatre programs I obtained for 1959-1960 still indicate both the names of the actors and the independent amateur group or cultural organization presenting the performance. Those from 1963-1964 indicate instead the performers' institutional affiliation – Pemuda Muhammadijah Mamadjang, the LKN-linked weekly *Expres Minggu*, the student association of the drama academy.

50 Unfortunately I have not had access to accounts in local newspapers of the meeting in Makassar to discuss the Manifesto Kebudayaan. It would have been in keeping with the interests of the Jakarta-based, communist-linked paper *Harian Rakjat* to report the reception of the Manifesto in the regions as hostile and friction-laden. Nevertheless the reports that I cite from the Makassar press of subsequent developments – conflict over the KKPSI writers' conference, calls by the left-linked *Pos Minggu Pagi* for the banning of other newspapers, revenge attacks on the offices of *Pos Minggu Pagi* – clearly indicate strong antagonism in the cultural field between communist-sympathising groups and others.

ary to discuss the Cultural Manifesto conveys the mounting tension as speakers for and against the Manifesto took the floor. It describes the overwhelming rejection of the document, as only 6 of the 30 people present signed their names, and reports that ridicule and anger were directed at the document's supporters, attributing to them statements such as, 'We love the colonialists because they are also human beings. We must be tolerant towards imperialism […]'.[51] In the previous Sunday's *Harian Rakjat*, Rosady Sani, editor of *Pos Minggu Pagi*, identified here as head of the organization Lembaga Seni Budaja Indonesia (LESBI, Institute for Indonesian Arts and Culture), for South Sulawesi,[52] attacks the Manifesto and denounces it as the motor for a coming event, the Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang Se Indonesia (KKPSI, All-Indonesia Writers' Conference) in Jakarta. He criticizes the high-handed, biased process of selection of Sulawesi participants in the conference, who are seen as in no way representative of their region.

By contrast, the LKN-connected Makassar weekly *Expres Minggu*, although in no way supporting the Manifesto Kebudayaan, rejects any suggestion of its connection with the KKPSI writers' conference.[53] The entire front page of the 22 March 1964 edition of *Expres Minggu* is devoted to articles concerning the KKPSI conference which took place from 1-7 March, praising its support of Pancasila state ideology and President Soekarno's Political Manifesto, and listing the important writers, government officials and military figures who attended. Those who have labelled the event counter-revolutionary and attempted to undermine it are vehemently denounced, with the names of the *Pos Minggu Pagi* editors Rosadi Sani and Hasan Usman mentioned explicitly. A satirical column purporting to represent the views of *Pos Minggu Pagi* gives nonsensical explanations of the term 'counter-revolutionary' and suggests that this category includes all kinds of esteemed institutions and individuals. The paper also reports angry reactions from the public to a call in *Pos Minggu Pagi* for *Expres Minggu* and other Makassar newspapers to be shut down. The offices of *Pos Minggu Pagi* and some other sites in the city had been defaced with graffiti and stones thrown at the home of one of the editors.[54]

51 'Kita tjinta kaum kolonial karena dia djuga manusia. Kita harus toleran kepada imperialisme […]' (Edi Anribalij 1964).

52 Anis Kaba and friends explain that both the cultural organization LESBI and the newspaper *Pos Minggu Pagi*, were aligned with the PARTINDO party.

53 In actuality the KKPSI conference was indeed organized by groups associated with the Manifesto Kebudayaan, and received explicit support and logistical assistance from the army (Foulcher 1986:126).

54 *Expres Minggu*, 22-3-1964.

Ongoing conflict between *Pos Minggu Pagi* on one side and LKN and other non-Communist organizations on the other is evident from reports in *Expres Minggu* in early August 1964. The 2 August edition reports a joint declaration by LKN and LESBUMI, rejecting the holding of a planned Musjawarah Besar Seniman Revolusioner se Kota Besar Makassar (Grand Conference of Makassar Revolutionary Artists) organized by Gelanggang (Arena), the culture segment of *Pos Minggu Pagi*, headed by A. Rosady Sani. The stated reason for their rejection is that the conference 'does not involve progressive and revolutionary artistic and cultural groups from the NASAKOM alliance'. Statements of rejection by the Muslim-connected cultural organization HSBI and the arts group Tifa are also included.[55]

However, beyond the sharp division separating the anti-communist and communist-identified groups, more flexible interactions still seem to have taken place. The 2 August 1964 edition of *Expres Minggu* announces the holding of a poetry-reading competition organized by LKN to both celebrate Independence Day and promote a 'crash program' to make South Sulawesi a *lumbung pangan*, 'food storehouse', or agriculturally wealthy. Participants had to present one of the winning entries from a writing competition that had been held by LKN the preceding June on the occasion of the 37th anniversary of the PNI.[56] Interestingly, the winning story in the writing competition, *Tanah harapan* (Land of hope), was by Mochtar Pabotinggi, and one of the winning poems was *Mentari petani* (The farmers' sun) by Anis Kaba.[57] Mochtar Pabotinggi, later to become nationally prominent as a political analyst with the Indo-

55 *Expres Minggu*, 2-8-1964.

56 *Harian Tanah Air*, 6-6-1964.

57 The agricultural 'crash program' is mentioned as the context of the writing competition, too, as well as the poetry-reading contest. Mochtar Pabotinggi's *Tanah harapan* is an engaging account of a young woman's return from the city to her home area, now a wasteland after its seizure by savage *gerombolan* (rebels) in a wave of killing. Although the rebels have now departed, the previous residents do not dare to return, believing the land to be cursed. The young woman tells the old horse cart driver escorting her, an elder in the community, about her meeting in a dream with a beautiful goddess, Dewi Sri, who has promised that the land will prosper if only upright people live there. The old man joyfully states that he will summon back the inhabitants, and the young woman, previously unsure if she is ready for marriage, decides to marry her fiancé and settle there, to raise a family and build up the land. The story of the dream has been a fabrication, designed to allay the superstitious fears of the old man and the other villagers, but the young woman's commitment is real.
Unfortunately I do not have a copy of Anis Kaba's *Mentari petani*, although another poem he wrote and published in 1964, *Lelaki tanah dusun* (Man of village land), picturing a farmer faithfully, tirelessly working his land, may indicate something of what it was like. The winning entry in the poetry competition (Anis Kaba was one of the runners up), *Mentari ditengah sawah* (Sun in the rice-fields) by Malik Jasin BS, consists of repeated exhortations to raise hoes and work together to make South Sulawesi fertile and Indonesia prosperous and free.

nesian Institute of Social Sciences, LIPI, was very active at that time in Muhammadiyah-linked cultural activities. Anis Kaba likewise was much involved in Muhammadiyah and its arts organization ISBM. Both Pabotinggi and Anis Kabar are mentioned as members of the organizational committee of the Mamadjang branch of Muhammadiyah;[58] both participated in the production of several ISBM plays. Their success in a competition run by the nationalists may suggest a degree of continuation, even in this polarized period, of the fluid relations between individual writers and cultural organizations described earlier.

In the field of modern theatre during this period, rivalry within Islamic groups, the Muhammadiyah-linked ISBM and NU-aligned LESBUMI, was reportedly a dominant factor (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:36-40; Anis Kaba personal communication). LESBUMI's involvement through NU with the government's NASAKOM project, in contrast to ISBM's independent position, was one source of friction. Of major importance was the fact that the two major dramatists and directors, Rachman Arge and Aspar Paturusi, were in different camps; Aspar with ISBM, and Arge in LESBUMI.[59] A relatively low-level of competition from the Left compared to Jakarta and other regions may have contributed to this situation. Anis Kabar and his friends mention that LEKRA was not very active in modern theatre in Makassar, concentrating its energies instead on traditional performances among Javanese migrant communities. Thus in Makassar theatre, friction and competition between Islamic groups was more significant than Left-Right rivalry. As in the case of Bali described by Darma Putra in his contribution to this volume, the divisions that predominated in the local context did not necessarily correspond to the national picture.

Precisely how these differences affected performances and how the rivalry was played out is unclear, merely hinted at rather than discussed directly in available sources. Fahmi Syariff reports how a village presentation by an ISBM group of a play with a strong Islamic proselytizing intent, using Arabic dress and sound effects of camels, was plunged into darkness when four unknown individuals ran off with the lamps illuminating the stage. He suggests that the incident shows how seriously conflicts between political organizations impacted on Islamic arts at the village level. But regard-

58 *Mertju Suar*, 3-3-1965.

59 The *Harian Rakjat* report of the Makassar meeting concerning the Manifesto Kebudayaan gives a picture of the differing positions of the two figures. Aspar is described speaking fierily in support of the document, being talked down by the meeting, but stating that he will nevertheless sign it as an individual. Arge asserted that unless the Manifesto had been produced by a gathering of NASAKOM artists, there was nothing to discuss, he was against it (Edi Anribalij 1964).

ing the cause of the disruption he says only that the owners of the lamps were not from Muhammadiyah circles. Whether rival LESBUMI groups were suspected as perpetrators, whether rejection of the overtly proselytizing style or Middle Eastern imagery of the play played any part in the incident is not explained (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:37-8).

Another example of the challenges facing theatre productions in this context, apart from the ISBM-LESBUMI conflict, is the 1964 ISBM production *Jang konsekwen* (The principled one), directed by Aspar, with Anis Kaba as head of production. The initial plan to stage *Domba-domba Revolusi* (Lambs of the Revolution) by Javanese playwright B. Soelarto, foundered when the play was deemed counter-revolutionary and the police denied a performance permit. The performers then changed the title of the play, while retaining its theme, that of an honest hero – here clearly defined as a devout Muslim – who resists the temptations offered him to join corrupt intrigues among government and military figures. The next hurdle was the ruling by the Muhammadiyah that male and female actors could not appear on stage together, whereas the play contained a number of important female roles. Fortunately, the performers were able to appeal to the Islamic writer and intellectual Hamka,[60] who happened to be in Makassar at the time. With Hamka's blessing the play was able to go ahead with a mixed male and female cast. On the night of the performance, however, LEKRA staged a noisy event outside the theatre, intended to disrupt proceedings. While LEKRA staged few plays of their own, the use of spoiling tactics was fairly common.[61]

Rahman Arge himself plays down the notion of conflict among Islamic cultural organizations and theatre groups in the pre-1965 years. Instead he highlights a production which he describes as bringing together the different groups, not only ISBM and LESBUMI but also LKN, in shared artistic and ideological expression. Around 1963-1964 Arge wrote a play *Tanah dan hati manusia* (Land and the human heart) on the theme of conflict over land. He suggests that it proposed a 'humanistic' solution to land disputes, though discussion and negotiation, in contrast to the class conflict promoted by the communists.[62]

The play takes place in a village setting: a student from an aristocratic landowning family has returned to assist local farmers achieve

60 For a discussion of Hamka's importance as a religious and cultural figure in this period see Hairus Salim's contribution to this volume.

61 Anis Kabar, personal communication, June 2009.

62 Personal communication by phone, 23-10-2009.

better conditions, not by physically attacking the wealthy landowners who are exploiting them but by using the structures of the state to achieve their rights. The student, Bachtiar, also enlightens the farmers about the injustices of the aristocratic class system, at odds with the ideal of social equality central to both Islamic religion and modern progress. In the final scene Bachtiar and a farmer friend confront Bachtiar's uncle, the evil local landlord, and his henchmen. When conflict escalates and the uncle calls for the police, Bachtiar reveals that he has already contacted the police, as well as security guards and legal officials. He has informed them of the uncle's offences, including not only exploiting farmers but also protecting gangs of *gerombolan* (Darul Islam rebels), and collaborating with the communist organization for farmers, (Barisan Tani Indonesia, BTI) in destroying rival traders. Now the farmers will see how the institutions of the state protect their interests.[63]

Arge reports that the play was staged for a large gathering at the Senayan stadium in Jakarta in August 1965, involving performance groups from all over Indonesia. He was the director, and Aspar Paturusi one of the actors. While the performances were supposed to address socialist themes, their play celebrated 'humanistic' values. Fahmi Syariff gives the name of the event where the play was performed as Musyawarah Besar Tani, the 'Grand Congress of Farmers' (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:55). Jakarta newspaper reports from late July and early August 1965 confirm that a Musjawarah Besar Tani Se-Indonesia 'All-Indonesia Grand Congress of Farmers' was held in the city from 20-30 July 1965. They mention at least one evening of theatre performances being staged in conjunction with the congress, although no direct reference is made to a play from South Sulawesi.[64]

If the *Tanah dan hati manusia* production served to unite Islamic cultural groups, an incident that occurred some years later suggests that tensions and rivalries were not forgotten. A theatre event was held in 1967, intended, Arge reports, to celebrate the joint struggle of the artists of Makassar against the Communists. The groups LESBUMI and ISBM performed on the first two nights, with two individual productions on the third night. The title of the LESBUMI play, *Pembentji matahari* (literally 'hater of the sun') written and

63 I obtained a copy of the play through Anis Kaba. It appears to have been retyped from the original – it uses the revised spelling system introduced in 1973 and is dated '84', presumably 1984. Pak Anis suggests that the play was probably retyped in preparation for production by another theatre group at that time.

64 *Harian Rakjat,* 21-7-1965; Kohar 1965; Soesilo 1965. Fahmi Syariff's account actually cites August 1963 as the date of the Jakarta farmers' congress where Rahman Arge's play was performed. But since newspaper reports of the 1965 Musjawarah Besar Tani describe it as the first event of its kind, 1965 seems clearly the correct date.

directed by Rahman Arge, was interpreted by some ISBM members as a deliberate assault on the Muhammadiyah, which has the sun as its symbol. In response, Aspar Paturusi wrote a play to be performed by ISBM entitled *Membakar dunia* (Burn the world) targeting the NU symbol of the globe. In actuality *Pembentji matahari* is unconnected with Muhammadiyah. The 'hater of the sun' is an outlaw gunrunner, Djoni, who hides away from the light, literally and figuratively, but still has faith in God and rejects the materialist views of his communist companion, Marno. At the point of death, mortally wounded by Marno, yet managing to kill him and save the life of his childhood friend Amal, Djoni asks Amal to remove his sunglasses, gasping '*Aku rindu matahari*', 'I miss the sun'. The theme of the play is Djoni's religious redemption, and the symbolic elimination of communism through the death of Marno. Fortunately, the suspicious ISBM members found this out before the theatre event, changed their performance plans, and the play *Pembakar dunia* was never staged. After its Makassar production *Pembentji matahari* was presented again at a national theatre festival in Jakarta in 1971 (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:35-6; Anis Kaba and Fahmi Syariff, personal communication).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The play *Pembentji matahari*, and the performances of the Islamic-aligned theatre groups prior to 1965, illustrate a significant feature of cultural activity in Makassar in the 1950s and 1960s – its participation in national political developments and cultural production, yet local distinctiveness. Cultural life in South Sulawesi in the mid-1960s was politicized through the same cultural streams and organizations as other centres, but local factors shaped the nature of inter-group relations. In modern theatre, Islamic groups which in other areas collaborated to confront a common enemy here sparred with one another. Rivalry among these groups evidently lingered on into the New Order period, even after the time of direct political and cultural conflict had ended. It seems possible that this shared local character, although fraught with its own conflicts, helped facilitate a rebuilding of cultural structures after 1965-1966. In 1968, about thirty artists from the remaining groups held a meeting chaired by Anis Kaba in which it was decided to form a joint cultural body. In July 1969, just six months after the formation of the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Arts Council), the Dewan Kesenian Makassar (Makassar Arts Council) was established (Fahmi Syariff n.d.:40-1).

Local distinctiveness did not necessarily involve a local focus. As emphasized above, writers and artists in South Sulawesi in the 1950s and 1960s identified strongly with the Indonesian nation; they saw their work as contributing to the building of a new national culture, rather than focusing more narrowly on regional, local genres and practices. Modern culture for the new nation drew on international models, celebrating liberal, individual values and employing naturalist, realist styles. While contemporary art and performance in South Sulawesi at a later period was to engage creatively with traditional legends and local rituals and performance genres, at this time the emphasis was on the new, the gaze outward. The cultivation of local, traditional cultural forms, in the case of Andi Sapada's work with Sulawesi dance, involved reworking the local to accord with new aesthetic standards and wider public tastes.

In building the new, these writers, artists and cultural figures were fuelled by great enthusiasm and an impressive idealism. They worked across a range of fields, and for much of the period collaborated in varied and productive ways. Responding as creatively as they could to the conditions and opportunities of their time, they leave an important legacy.

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14

The capital of pulp fiction and other capitals
Cultural life in Medan, 1950-1958

Marije Plomp

The general picture of cultural activities in Indonesia during the 1950s emanating from available studies is based on data pertaining to the nation's political and cultural centre,[1] Jakarta, and two or three other main cities in Java (Foulcher 1986; Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri and Muhidin M. Dahlan 2008). Other regions are often mentioned only in the framework of the highly politicized debate on the outlook of an Indonesian national culture that had its origins in the 1930s (Foulcher 1986:32-3). Before the war, the discussions on culture in relation to a nation were anti-colonial and nationalistic in nature, but after Independence the focus shifted. Now the questions were whether or not the regional cultures could contribute to a modern Indonesian national culture, and how they were to be valued vis-à-vis that national culture. What cultural life in one of the cities in the outer regions actually looked like, and what kind of cultural networks – national, transnational and transborder – existed in the various regions has yet to be researched.

With this essay I aim to contribute to a more differentiated view on the cultural activities in Indonesia in the 1950s by charting a part of the cultural world of Medan and two of its (trans)national and transborder cultural exchange networks in the period 1950-1958. This time span covers the first eight years of Indonesia as an independent nation until the start of the insurrection against the central army and government leaders by North Sumatran army commander Colonel Maludin Simbolon on 22 December 1958 (Conboy 2003:37-51). After 1958, this and other rebellious move-

1 I thank Peter Keppy (Netherlands Institute for War Documention, Amsterdam) for his references to literature and his useful comments on a first version of this paper and Alie Soekardi (*Analisa* newspaper, Medan) for the text of Zainuddin Pangaduan Lubis' speech 'Roman "picisan" dan kita'.

ments in West Sumatra and Sulawesi led to changed relationships between the nation's political and cultural centre and the areas outside Java. Also, the Malayan Independence of 31 August 1957 and the subsequent return of many Malay nationalist writers from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur altered relations between Indonesian and Malayan cultural workers.

A study of the cultural life of Medan yields a different view on the common perception of Indonesian culture in the 1950s. Available studies on this period focus on the national, highbrow culture, but in Medan – and likely in other large Indonesian cities as well – the cultural scene was dominated by popular culture, produced for and consumed by the masses. As it turns out, only a small section of city's inhabitants took part in the emerging 'modern' national culture. Although the first decade after Independence has been discussed in studies on forms of popular cultural expression, such as Frederick's article (1982) on the genesis of *dangdut*, popular culture with its exchange networks has not yet been compared to highbrow culture inhabiting the same geographical space. Research into the Medan world of Malay movies, pulp fiction, cartoons and popular music uncovers cultural networks different to those connected with self-consciously national culture. Moreover, it lays bare different directions of cultural exchange and highlights a changed constellation of centre and periphery.

Popular cultural forms and (trans)national exchange networks in Indonesia have not received the scholarly attention they deserve. Western-centric notions of artistic value and the subsequent dichotomy between high and low forms of cultural expression excluded the popular domain as an area for investigation. As most researchers focussed on the creation of a national identity through politics of culture, they turned to the discourse of the cultural elite in Jakarta. But as scholars such as Harper (1999) and Kahn (2006) have convincingly demonstrated in the case of Malayan cities, popular culture formed the breeding grounds of counter narratives of identity, and as such constitutes a fertile ground for further research. In Malaya, the British quest for an Anglicized vision of the 'Malayan' 'was defeated by an upsurge of explorations in ethnic and religious identity that emanated from networks within the vibrant popular cultures in the towns' (Harper 1999:275). Moreover, as popular culture caters to the taste of the public, research can yield new insights into how notions of nation, religion and ethnicity were experienced by the masses.

Medan in the fifties forms a unique area to investigate the interaction between a cultural periphery and the national cul-

tural centre, Jakarta. Close historic ties between the east coast of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula on the other side of the Malacca Straits made the region subject to forces different to those elsewhere in the archipelago. Before the war, contacts between the inhabitants of Medan and Jakarta had mainly served colonial purposes. Shared Malay language and traditions, strong kinship ties with Malays living on the other side of the Malacca Straits, and the close proximity to the Malay Peninsula, meant that a large number of the inhabitants of Medan and the east coast were economically, socially and culturally oriented towards Singapore and Malaya, instead of far away Java. Malays on either side of the Straits were like *bambu serumpun*, different shoots of the same bamboo. It was only after the rather sudden proclamation of independence by Soekarno and Hatta in Jakarta on 17 August 1945 that the Sumatrans saw themselves confronted with a new community of which they were part, the Indonesian nation-state, and they had to redefine themselves vis-à-vis this new nation and its leaders.

In my discussion below, following a short introduction of the city of Medan and its inhabitants, I address Medan's thriving popular culture and the related cultural exchange network between Medan and Singapore that formed part of the fluid continuum of what is called the Malay World. I then contrast this network with the relations of Medan-based authors of the 'high' modern Indonesian literature with their colleagues in the nation's cultural centre, Jakarta. Finally, I will return to the Malay connection in an analysis of the relations of the Malay writers-nationalists in Singapore with their fellow writers in Jakarta and other cities on Java. In the conclusion I create a map of the area in which Jakarta, Medan and Singapore, as main cultural centres, form a triangle, showing the different itineraries of cultural traffic between them.

CITY AND CITIZENS

The city of Medan has always been a cosmopolitan centre of commerce. Its geographic location – near the shore of the Malacca Straits on the one side, the foothills of the central mountainous area rich in minerals and timber on the other, and enclosed by fertile lowlands – made it a crossroads of traders of diverse ethnic descent. Malays, Acehnese, Toba Batak, Karo, Mandailing, Simalungun, Dairi Pak Pak, Acehnese, Chinese, Arabs, and Europeans passed through or took up permanent residence in what

soon became the largest city of the island. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War, large numbers of Javanese were contracted as coolies for the plantations that sprang up in the lowlands (Stoler 1995: 1-7, 25-8).

For generations, the fertile and sparsely inhabited lowlands attracted Batak farmers from the mountainous interior, where the conditions for agriculture were difficult. Malay local rulers granted them land in exchange for their promise to convert to Islam. As members of a multi-ethnic Muslim brotherhood, and removed from their native community, a large number of them gave up Batak traditions, adopted a Malay/Muslim name and became 'Malay'. After the war, many of these 'Malays' moved to Medan for reasons of education, work or safety (to escape the danger caused by the war for Independence, the bloody social revolution of 1946, and the national army chasing the illegal squatters on plantation grounds in the fifties (Pelzer 1982). A similar process took place with Acehnese immigrants and descendants of Javanese coolies, and the result was a large, heterogeneous Medan Malay community.

Before the war, the city's inhabitants had numbered 80,000, but by 1954 the number had grown sixfold to half a million. In 1954, nine years after the end of World War II, Medan still suffered the effects of the Japanese occupation. Homeless former *romusha* (forced labourers during the occupation) and *heiho* (Indonesians who served in the Japanese army during the occupation) roamed the streets, together with those veteran freedom fighters whose return to society had failed. A whole generation of young adults were (partly) illiterate, because they had lacked proper education during the war. The rapid urbanization that had taken place after the war led to a myriad of problems. A shortage of land and houses resulted in large scale squatting and a stagnating economy. The city's public facilities were by no means sufficient for the increasing number of new inhabitants: schools, libraries, roads, transportation, markets and hospitals were in dire need of improvement or expansion. The influx of poor, illiterate farmers from the surrounding villages, combined with the effects of the Japanese occupation, was responsible for a high rate of illiteracy.

The officials of the municipal government and local branches of national institutions were determined to improve the situation. There was a Biro Rekonstruksi Nasional – a governmental organization founded to support veteran freedom fighters – that organized free vocational courses, granted loans to start up small

businesses, and ran several companies, such as a car service station, offering employment to veterans. The municipal Department of Information set up literacy courses and small libraries, and installed radios in public places. In February 1954, the department distributed no fewer than 20,000 training books among the city's inhabitants in an effort to fight illiteracy, but without any significant result. For the poor, displaced and homeless, there were social counsellors, a shelter at the city's outskirts, and in some cases even a free ticket home. Free courses to increase the population's general knowledge were open to all citizens. And with the first ever democratic national elections coming up in 1955, the Department of Information organized public lectures, movie screenings and gatherings for students to instil patriotic support of modern democracy in the hearts and minds of the people of Medan.

The large number of political organizations, and women's, workers' and students' associations in Medan attest to the grass root level support for the activities directed at social and economic development undertaken by the local government. The citizens' concerns over and engagement with the city's and the nation's welfare also came to expression in the 14 local newspapers and about the same number of news and entertainment magazines published locally (*Buku tahunan* 1955).

Thus a lot was done, but it was not enough. The recent economic recession had strained the city's budget. In Medan, it was felt that it was time the central government in Jakarta stepped in and increased its contribution to the city's budget, which at that time stood at one third of the total budget. When the central government refused to do so, local dissatisfaction with the nation's leaders in the capital grew. Local media voiced sharp criticism of the country's leadership. The central issue was the unequal division of the nation's incoming funds by the central government. Time and again, it was argued that while Sumatra's natural resources – especially mining and the extraction of oil – had filled the nation's treasury, the island had not participated in the accumulated wealth. President Soekarno and Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo *cum suis* were openly criticized, not only because of the seemingly unfair division of funds, but also because the people of Medan – like elsewhere in Indonesia – realized that Soekarno's promises for socio-economic improvement had failed to materialize. The results of the 1955 elections showed how deep the divide had grown: Sumatra had become a MASJUMI party (Majelis Sjura Muslimin Indonesia, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims) stronghold against the aspirations of the ambi-

tious political party of Soekarno, the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party), whose supporters dominated the political scene in Java (Feith 1999).

POPULAR CULTURE AND THE MALAY WORLD

Unlike what one would perhaps expect from areas at a great distance from the nation's cultural centre, cities on other islands – both the main urban regions and mid-sized cities – possessed a lively cultural scene in the period under discussion. As Barbara Hatley shows in her contribution to this volume, several cities in Sulawesi were host to a variety of cultural activities. In Bali, LKN affiliated writers and performing artists were very productive, as Nyoman Darma Putra demonstrates in his study also in this volume. Melani Budianta's essay describes the diverse cultural circles of her hometown Malang where she lived as a child.

Despite the dim economic prospects – or perhaps because of it –,[2] Medan had a vibrant cultural life. As for production and consumption, it was popular culture that had the upper hand, as opposed to expressions of more serious, self-consciously modern Indonesian culture. Visual forms of popular culture such as films and cartoons – both relatively new media – appealed to wide public consumption, not least because of the city's high rate of illiteracy. In this respect, Medan resembled the main cities on the Malayan peninsula where, much to the chagrin of the British educators, 'plebeian tastes' ruled and the public preferred a sentimental Malay or Hollywood movie over a good novel (Harper 1999:282). It is telling that in Medan, *bea tontonan* – local taxes on cinema tickets – accounted for no less than one third of the total municipal budget. There were at least 16 movie theatres that screened Hollywood, Indian and Malay movies featuring prominent singers (*Buku tahunan* 1955:24, 219). Records of film music and songs from Malay movies from Singapore and the Federation of Malaya (Malaya as of 31 August 1957) such as *Hang Tuah* with musical arrangements by the popular Malayan actor, singer and songwriter P. Ramlee, found their way to fans in Medan.

Radio was another popular medium. The Medan studio of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) was frequented by popular singers, choirs, and bands. Lily's Band, led by singer/composer Lily

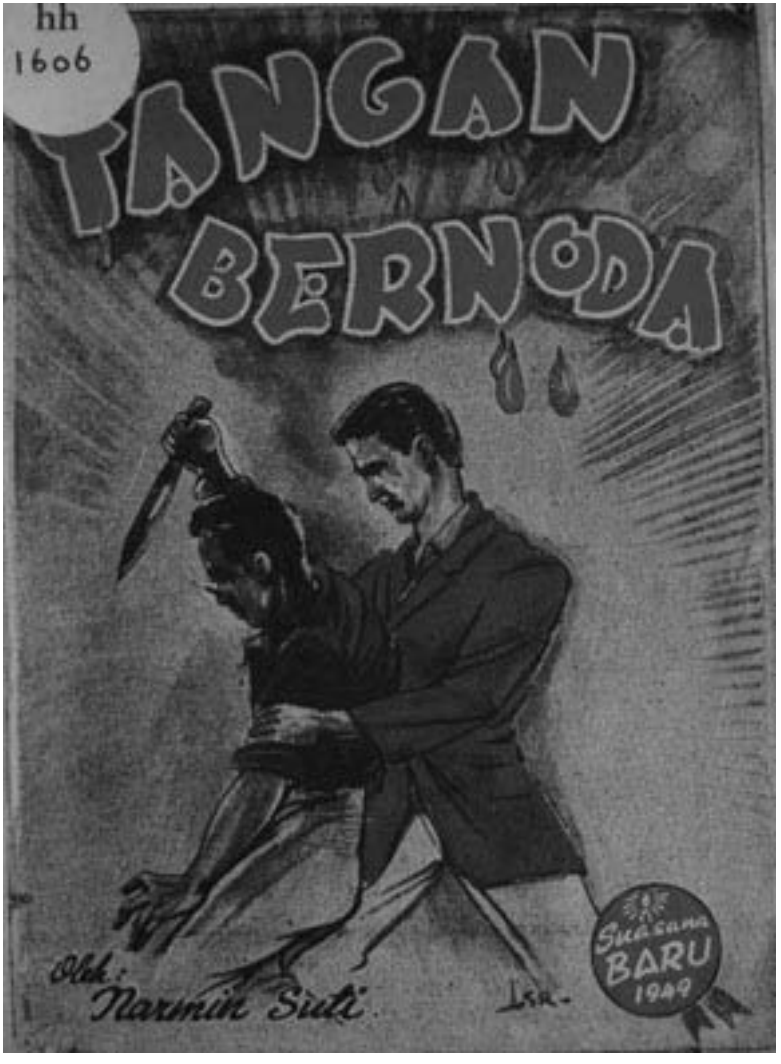
2 Compare the popularity of cabaret, theatre and other forms of amusement such as soccer games in the Netherlands during World War II.

Suhairy, was the largest and most renowned musical ensemble of Medan. Famous singer of Malay songs Rubiah was also a member of Lily's Band; her voice was used to dub popular Malay movies from Singapore at the time. Another popular singer/songwriter from Medan whose Malay songs were aired by RRI was Achmad CB. Partly raised in Malaya, this international `king of *keroncong*' – he had won the acclaimed Singapore *keroncong* contest three years in row – recorded his songs in Singapore. Other genres that gained popularity in the fifties were modern Batak song, *gambus* and *nasyid*, the latter two inspired by music from the Middle East. Lastly, bands, choirs and musical ensembles from Java and other islands regularly performed in the studio of RRI Medan, as well as in other venues in the city. Besides music, RRI had literature programs and poetry readings that enjoyed a high popularity.

In the mid-1950s, Medan was known as 'the capital of pulp fiction'. Private printing and publishing in Indonesia had begun in Medan in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and from the start, the Medan printing houses had catered for the market. About half of all publications found throughout Indonesia in the 1950s were printed in Medan (Barus Siregar 1953). But it was not so much the quantity as much as the quality of these publications that set tongues wagging at the time. While there was hardly a market for 'serious' modern Indonesian literature in Medan, popular fiction featuring robbery, murder, smuggling, love and sex sold exceptionally well, especially amongst the youth.[3] Not surprisingly, critical remarks on this popular genre can be found in abundance in the national cultural pages and magazines published in Java dedicated to modern Indonesian literature and national culture, such as *Kompas*, *Zenith* and *Merdeka*. Film director Usmar Ismail, for instance, felt that these stories had nothing to offer to the readers, except shallow emotions, cheap sentiments, and moral irresponsibility, and that they would ultimately poison the mind (Barus Siregar 1953:24). The content of these *roman picisan* together with the images of female singers and movie stars in the entertainment magazines deemed 'obscene' by many, earned the city its questionable epithet (Nasution 1955:261).

The negative appraisal of writings from Medan after the war was partly based on pre-war colonial Dutch ideas about literature that continued to exert their influence after the Dutch had lost their dominant position in Indonesia. With the founding of the government printing house Balai Poestaka (BP) in 1908, the Dutch set a standard of what constituted good literature (Teeuw

3 In this genre, Joesoef Sou'yb and Narmin Suti were two of the most prolific writers in Medan.

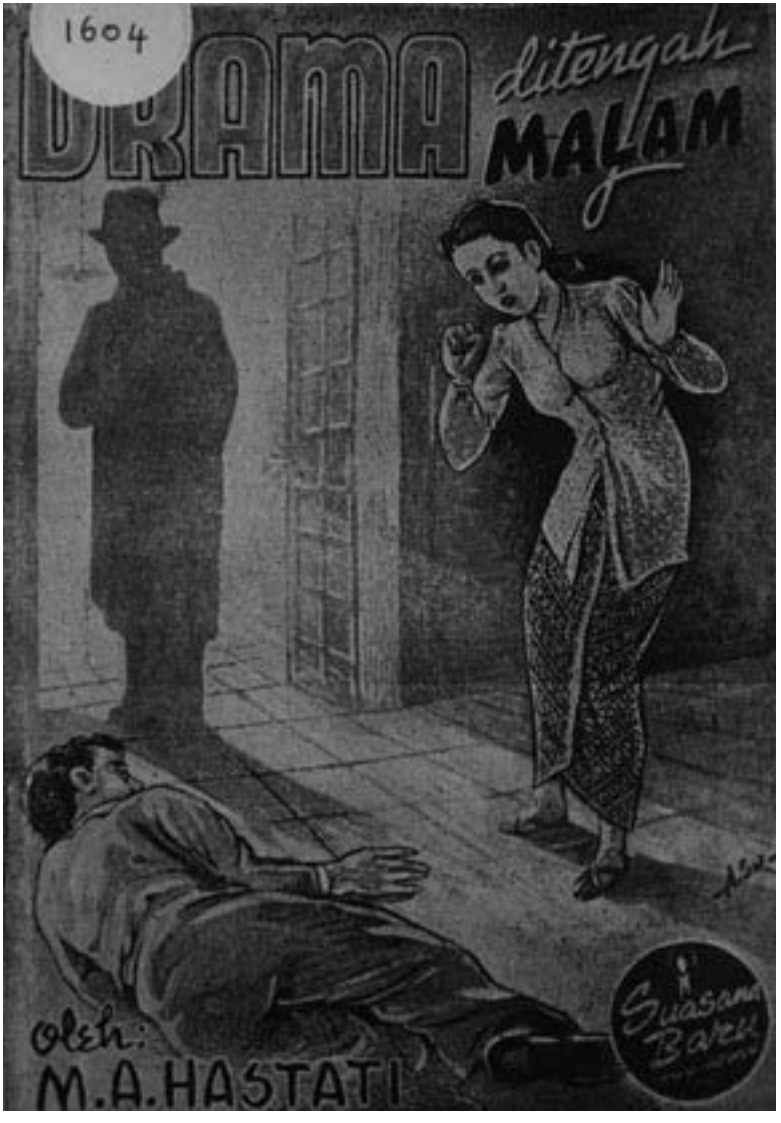


'Tangan bernoda'. (Narmin Suti)

1986:13-5). Fiction that did not meet the Dutch literary standard was called *sastra liar*: literature that was 'wild', 'untamed', written by authors who did not abide to 'the rules of literature'. But this standard was set up with colonial interests in mind, more than literary merit. Literary texts addressing religion, race, and politics were deemed to be dangerous to the colonial enterprise, and thus labelled *sastra liar*. Moreover, if the Malay language used in a literary text did not meet the Dutch standard of what was proper Malay or Indonesian, it was rejected as well. As several Sumatran writers and playwrights from before the war voiced their anti-colonial critique in their works, many of their texts were seen as *sastra liar*. Yet one must bear in mind that this artificial boundary was not as fixed as it seems. Kratz (1991:194-5) for instance, has shown that a survey of literary magazines and light entertainment magazines reveals that even the recognized authors frequently published in magazines rarely mentioned by critics. Following the same line of thought, Teeuw (1986:73-5) mentions Hamka's stories that were first published as *roman picisan* and later taken over by Balai Poestaka.

Another pejorative label pertaining specifically to texts from Medan was *sastra Medan*. It referred to the works of Hamka and his fellow Muslim authors from Medan, which were more nationalistic and political then those written in Batavia (Roolvink 1950 cited in Kratz 2000:152-7). Hamka's pre-war engagement with defending his works as works of literature found its continuation in the 1950s, when he again engaged in a polemic with writers and critics from Java on the quality of literature from Sumatra. In 1999, a former Medan author of popular fiction, Zainuddin Pangaduan Lubis, made a convincing plea for a reappraisal of fiction from Medan. He pointed to the pioneering role of Islamic publishers and Hamka's involvement in the development of the *roman picisan*, and stressed the contribution of these texts to the development of a national language (Zainuddin Pangaduan Lubis 1999). Also, after reading Maier's explorative essay (2004) on Hamka's ideas on art and literature and his works one cannot but think of Hamka's 'tales', as Maier calls them, as literature.

Before the war, Dutch language magazines in the Dutch East Indies had featured American comics, but they became really popular only after the war. In Medan for instance, *Waktu* featured a series of Dan Barry's comic *Flash Gordon* in 1954. American comic distributor King Feature Syndicate conquered the Indonesian market, and Alex Raymond's *Rip Kirby*, Wilson McCoy's *Phantom*, and *Tarzan* became familiar to a large Indonesian audience. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Indonesians began to



'Drama ditengah malam'. (M.A. Hastati)

create comic works that reflected the social and political issues of the day. Comics – in Medan featuring characters from Batak folk lore, and in Java the *wayang* shadow play repertoire – emerged in response to the foreign domination of the world of comics.[4] With the support of Mohammad Said, journalist and founder and main editor of Medan's prominent newspaper *Waspada*, Taguan Hardjo, a Dutch-Javanese immigrant from Suriname who had settled in Medan, became one of Indonesia's most popular comic artists.[5]

In light of the role of Jakarta as the nation's cultural centre, its contribution to Medan's popular culture was rather limited. Popular bands from all over Indonesia, including Medan, toured the nation and often settled in Jakarta for a short period to record their music and get public exposure in the national newspapers and magazines.[6] And while the young writers, playwrights, painters and actors in Medan who partook in the 'serious' national culture regarded Jakarta as their point of orientation, the masses looked across the Malacca Straits, to Singapore, for the release of a new film featuring popular Malay movie stars such as P. Ramlee or Kasma Booty.

Since the 1920s, Penang and Singapore had been centres of popular culture of what is commonly known as the Malay World, of which Medan formed part. This geographical area comprised Southern Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, Sumatra and the coastal regions of Kalimantan, and was inhabited by peoples who shared the Malay language, Malay traditions and the Islamic faith.[7] Kahn (2006) has shown that they were – and still are – in fact a more heterogeneous group of peoples than commonly thought. Their later classification by Malaya's political elite as 'ethnically Malay' since

4 Examples of early comics published in Medan are an Indonesian comic version of Jules Verne's *A journey to the center of the earth*, by M. Ali's [whose name is also spelt M. Ali, M. Ali's and M. Ali'e], a Bugis story *Daeng Topo pendekar Bugis*, by Sigajo, and *Indra manusia adjaib*, also by Sigajo. Publishers of comics were, amongst others, Semesta, Harris and Toko Buku Casso.

5 Ade Tanesia 2002:60-5. Taguan Hardjo was born in 1935 in Suriname, at that time still a Dutch colony. As the eldest of fourteen siblings he was drawn to art from a very early age. When his mother – of Dutch descent – returned to the Netherlands, Taguan joined his father – a Javanese – to West Sumatra. Shortly after, he left his family and went to Medan, where his career as a comic artist took off. Amongst Taguan Hardjo's most popular works are *Abu Nawwas* (1958 and 1960), *Batas firdaus* (1960), and *Mentjari musang berdjanggut* (1968), http://www.pragatcomic.com/forum/index.php?topic=607.0;wap2, (accessed 23-7-2009).

6 Peter Keppy, personal conversation, May 2009.

7 For recent discussions on the Malay world and Malay identity (politics), see Timothy P. Barnard (2004). In his compelling alternative literary history of Malay writing, Henk Maier (2004), using Malay texts, argues that the essence of 'Malayness' is heterogeneity, adaptability and a constant negotiating on what exactly constitutes 'Malayness'.

the late forties served political ends and as such it became part of the official Malay national narrative, up to the present day.[8]

With the founding of two competing film studios in Singapore in 1947 and 1952 and the production of a large number of successful Malay films, Singapore became the centre of Malay film. The films were produced with Chinese capital, by Indian directors and with Malay actors. Film became a huge industry and drew to Singapore many Malays who wanted to try their luck as actors, playwrights or composers. The format of the early films was partly based on that of a form of popular Malay theatre called *bangsawan*, with an important role for music (Harper 1999:282-5).

Relatively many of those 'Malays' who travelled to Singapore to work in the film or related music industry came from Medan. It is striking that several key figures in the Singapore film business were exponents of the pre-war world of theatre (both *bangsawan* and modern theatre, called *sandiwara*), music and silent film in North Sumatra. The parents of the laureate composer Ahmad Jafa'ar for instance, were silent-cinema operators. He learned to play different musical instruments and performed in the orchestra that accompanied silent-movie showings. Singer Rubiah joined a travelling theatre group as a young girl, when her family could no longer afford to feed her. Achmad CB started his career before the war as a *bangsawan* actor; later he founded his own modern theatre group Asmara Dhana/Rayuan Asmara. Lastly, the popular movie star Kasma Booty was only fourteen when she joined Achmad CB's theatre group in Penang in order to escape persecution by the Japanese. All four had been travelling around the region and performing since they were young, and their move to Singapore and switch to the movies was just the next logical step in their career.

It is interesting to note that the three 'champions of the Malay movie and song' from Medan, Rubiah, Achmad CB, and Kasma Booty were ethnically not Malay at all. They belonged to what Kahn has called the 'other Malays': Malayans or Indonesians of mixed ethnic origin, born and/or raised in the Malay regions. Rubiah's father was a Batak, her mother Javanese. Achmad CB had an Arab background (Said Tripoli, a renowned *bangsawan* actor and director, was his uncle), while Kasma Booty's father was Dutch.

In Singapore, 'The world of the movies, cabaret bands and starlets was a network of gifted individuals who set the tone of anti-colo-

8 Recently this stifling ethnic label has been challenged by Malaysian political activists and others who plea for the acknowledgment of the Malay heterogeneity. Political scientist Farish A. Noor is one of the leading advocates of this idea (see also the website The Other Malaysia, www.othermalaysia.org).

nial politics' (Harper 1999:290). The Indonesian artists who arrived in Singapore met with nationalist writers, actors and musicians who had fled Malaya to escape the British Emergency Regulations. Together they were responsible for the radicalization of popular culture in Singapore (Harper 1999:290-1; Kahn 2006: 114-7).

ACHMAD CB

As an illustration of this fluid traffic of popular 'Malay' artists from Medan and their orientation to Singapore as cultural centre, I will elaborate on the life of singer-songwriter-theatre director Achmad CB. Born in 1915 in Medan into a Malay-Arab family as Achmad Awab Aziz, he was taken at the age of five by his father, a trader, to Malaya where he spent a large part of his youth. As a young man, he settled in Medan and became an active member of Gerakan Rakjat Indonesia (GERINDO, Indonesian People's Movement), a radical Marxist people's party. To spread the party's political ideas, he established the theatre group Asmara Dhana; the group mainly staged anti-colonial plays by the nationalist Muhamad Saleh Umar. It was because of his fierce anti-colonial attitude that Achmad Awab Aziz got the name he kept as his artist name: Achmad C(as) B(ara), meaning something like 'having a short fuse'.

As he was being closely watched by the Dutch intelligence service because of his political activities, he fled to Singapore. There, he recorded his songs at His Master's Voice and became a popular singer of Malay songs. With the onset of the Second World War, he moved back to Medan, and continued his work as leader of Asmara Dhana. After the war, during the Revolution, Asmara Dhana performed in North Sumatra to collect money for the freedom fighters of Nasional Pelopor Indonesia (NAPINDO, Indonesian National Pioneers). When the Dutch were after him, he fled to Malaya where he continued his benefit performances for the Indonesian nationalist cause.

Following international recognition of Indonesia's independence in 1949, Achmad stayed in Malaya and travelled back and forth to Singapore. With his group, renamed Rayuan Asmara, he dedicated himself to the struggle for an independent Malaya. He wrote many nationalist Malay songs that were sung at rallies and aired on the radio. His song *31 Ogos 1957* – named after the date of Malayan Independence – later became part of the Malaysian national history of the struggle for Independence. As an actor he featured in Malay movies.

Achmad CB as a movie star in the 1950s. (collection Achmad CB)

Achmad established close connections with aspiring political leaders such as Tunku Abdul Rahman, who headed the United Malays National Organisation, and supported the UMNO in election campaigns. After Malayan Independence in 1957, the group followed Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on propaganda tours to Brunei and Sarawak. In 1963, after *Konfrontasi* had strained relationships between Indonesia and Malaysia, the Indonesian government banned Achmad's performances in Indonesia. As a 'Malay nationalist', the Indonesian government could not exactly place him; because of his former cultural-political activism in Malay[si]a, the Indonesians no longer trusted him.[9]

9 After 1965, Achmad CB became a supporter of Soeharto's New Order politics and composed several New Order propaganda songs. He kept performing with Asmara Dhana until around 1980. His active career spanned 45 years and four different regimes. From an innovative artist who rose to fame in the urban popular culture between 1935 and 1960, he became a marginalized artist in the 1970s, a remnant of the pre-war *bangsawan* tradition. However, his contribution to the Malaysian nationalist struggle was recognized by the Malaysian government. Until his old age, he was regularly invited to Kuala Lumpur to sing his song *31 Ogos 1957* on national television on Malaysian Independence Day.

MODERN LITERATURE AND THE INDONESIAN NATION

While forms of popular culture were enjoyed widely throughout most sections of Medan's population in the late 1950s, there was a much smaller audience for the more serious arts of modern Indonesian painting and literature.[10] When, for instance, in July 1957 *studieclub* Sipongang in Medan organized a discussion program on literature for local writers and their public, the organizers were surprised that almost 50 people had shown up.[11] At another literary event, the room was filled, but only with high officials from municipal and regional government institutions, who had felt unable to turn down an official invitation (Ramadhan K.H. 1952). Cultural and literary magazines were not commercially viable and the central government did not provide funds for literary publications (Barus Siregar 1953:25; Aan 1957). A few local newspapers and magazines featured cultural pages, but space was limited.[12]

Writing modern Indonesian literature in the 1950s was not just an act of self expression, or a means to earn money. The national cultural policy of the young republic centred on the formation of national culture that was modern and at the same time thoroughly Asian, and modern Indonesian literature was to form an important element of that culture. With this assignment in mind, Indonesia's writers and cultural critics realized what was at stake: the outlook of a national literature that was to form part of an Indonesian identity and at the same time would shape that identity. Yet the young age of the majority of writers in Medan – most of them were still in high school when their first work was published – meant that often other, less pretentious, motives prevailed, such as the wish to attract the attention of women[13] or to become famous.

The young writers and wannabe-writers of modern Indonesian literature in Medan had to compete with writers from elsewhere in Indonesia to have their work accepted for publication in the

10 Modern theatre, on the other hand, enjoyed a wide popularity. There was a large number of amateur and semi-professional theatre groups in Medan, and performances drew large crowds. When LEKRA once staged one of Utuy Tatang Sontani's plays at an open-air stage on the beach at Pantai Cermin, the location could no longer be reached because of a traffic jam (Chalik Hamid, personal conversation, 21-9-2008). For more on theatre in North Sumatra, see Muhammad TWH 1992, and Michael Bodden 2010.

11 'Pertemuan sastera di Medan', *Arena* 3-14/15 (1 August 1957):28.

12 Cultural pages in local newspapers and magazines include 'Sipongang – Perumahan budaja – Sastera – bersama2 studi-klub "Sipongang"', in *Waktu*, with editors Bokor Hutasuhut, Asri Mochtar and Sedar, and 'Seni dan Budaja' in *Tugas*, with editors M. Sutardjo Shahputra and Bahauddin Darus.

13 Astaman Hasibuan was one of the writers who specifically mentioned this motivation (Astaman Hasibuan, personal conversation, 14-1-2009).

few national literary and cultural magazines published in Jakarta.[14] Most poems and short stories by Medan authors that appeared in the magazines still reflected their native – regional – soil, as they centred upon themes such as North Sumatran *kampung* life, Christianity, local freedom fighters and the clash between an urban, modern life style and the constraints of family and tradition.

The authoritative status of one of the literary editors in Jakarta, Hans Bague Jassin (known as H.B. Jassin), becomes clear from the following citation from Hamsad Rangkuti's account (2003:xiii) of the start of his career as a writer in Medan:

> At that time, the writers in Medan were competing with each other to have their stories published in the literary magazine *Sastra* in the nation's capital. Without telling anyone, I decided to send one of my short stories to *Warta Dunia*, another magazine published in Jakarta. The story did get published and I gained more self-confidence. Then, the most renowned author in Medan, Sori Siregar, contacted me and gave his reaction: he thought it was a really good story. He urged me to send it to *Sastra* as well, which I did. A month later I received a letter from *Sastra* stating that the story was accepted for publication. I felt as if I had won the lottery. […] I possessed the one thing that would make the established writers in Medan acknowledge my status as a writer: the recognition of the literary quality of my work by HB Jassin. […] It was as if that letter from *Sastra* was the official decree that I was a writer.

Not everyone in Medan accepted the authority of the self-proclaimed cultural leaders in Jakarta. There were voices, such as the writer Hamka, which questioned the status of Jakarta as the nation's cultural centre. Hamka, of West Sumatran origin, had lived in Medan for ten years before he moved to Jakarta to work as an editor of *Mimbar Agama*. As he still felt closely connected to Sumatra, and Medan in particular, he promoted Sumatra's regional cultures in his writings and defended them against attacks by leading cultural figures from Java such as Aoh Karta Hadimadja and Trisno Sumardjo (Aoh Karta Hadimadja 1952; Dada Meuraxa 1957:143-7). Hamka argued that Jakarta could not pos-

14 Authors from Medan whose work was published in national magazines and newspapers included: Bokor Hutasuhut, Asri Mochtar, Sedar, Sori Siregar, Chalik Hamid, Herman KS (with the pen name Jalaludin), Abdul Aziz's, Agam Wispi, Ibrahim Sinik, Bakri Siregar, Djohan Arifin Nasution, H.A. Dharsono (with the pen name Harun Arrasyhid), Zainuddin Tamir Koto (with the pen name Zatako), Zakaria M. Passe, Hr. Bandaharo, and Aziz Akbar. The publication *Khasanah; Biografi sastrawan Sumatera Utara* by Ahmad Sani Siregar and Sabaruddin Ahmad is a useful source for biographical information on authors from North Sumatra (Dewan Kesenian Medan, 1986). See also *Leksikon susastra Indonesia*, by Korrie Layun Rampan (2000).

sibly be the nation's cultural centre, as cities had never held that position in the past. The Indonesian cultural centres, he claimed, were to be found in the regional heartlands. He also criticized the cultural icons in Jakarta for their arrogance. When, for instance, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana in Jakarta revised spelling and grammar rules without consulting Malay language specialists from outside Java, Hamka expressed his strong disapproval. He felt that the Malays, as native speakers of the Malay language, were the true custodians of the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, and should be allotted a role in the development of that language (Dada Meuraxa 1957:151-2). Others felt that the cultural icons in Jakarta had no right to dictate the outlook of modern Indonesian literature and argued that Medan writers themselves should be involved in the evaluation of literary works.

For Malay writers and journalists, their mother tongue combined with basic writing skills was their entry ticket to world of literature and journalism. Thus it is not surprising that a relatively large group of writers of modern Indonesian literature originated from North Sumatra. There were many writers from Medan who moved to the nation's capital and cultural centre to be close to where it all happened. A quick search through the list of editors of these magazines reveals several influential writers of North Sumatran origin.[15]

One aspect of the cultural world of Medan in the fifties that strikes the eye is the role of certain individuals from Java in the development of modern literature and theatre. Cultural Manifesto (Manifes Kebudayaan)-signatory Bokor Hutasuhut, one of the main initiators of cultural activities in Medan during the fifties, declares how he and his writer-friend Alie Soekardi as high school students were introduced to modern Indonesian literature by the cultural page of local newspaper *Mimbar Umum* edited by Aoh Karta Hadimadja. Aoh was an influential writer and literary critic from Java, who worked in Medan as a journalist with *Mimbar Umum* in 1950-1952. His columns on modern Indonesian culture led to debates with local artists on the status of regional culture.

At that time, Bokor was a student at the Pembaruan High School, which was led by another individual who would become a cultural icon (of LEKRA signature), Bakri Siregar. After having studied Old Javanese literature in Java, Siregar had become a language teacher at a high school in Kota Radja (now Bandar Aceh) in Aceh. In 1950 he moved to Medan, taking several of his students with him.[16]

15 Sobron Aidit, Bakri Siregar and Hr. Bandaharo, for example.

16 Amongst them were F.L. Risakotta, a young writer who later moved to Jakarta to become an influential member of LEKRA, and the later essayist and head of LEKRA in North Sumatra, Aziz Akbar.

As head of the Pembaruan school, and teaching at other Medan schools as well, he was able to guide a large group of students into the world of modern literature and theatre.[17] A short time after Siregar's arrival in Medan,[18] he managed to become a leading figure in the city's cultural field as head of LEKRA[19] (Dharsono 1959; Korrie Layun Rampan 2000:83).

Lastly, with the arrival in Medan of communist Chinese refugees from Java in 1959 – after the central government had issued anti-Chinese regulations in the Peraturan Pemerintah 10 – relations between LEKRA and LKN affiliated cultural workers and their non-leftist colleagues deteriorated. Tan Fhu Kiong for instance, founded and edited the newspaper *Harian Harapan*, trumpet of the communists, and regularly launched personal attacks on writers who had not committed themselves to the communist cause.

Another important factor in the city's cultural arena was the national army. Army leaders were held in high esteem by the city's inhabitants and were present at inaugurations and performed as keynote speakers at public and cultural events. From the early fifties onwards, local army leaders acted as important patrons of the arts. They financed performances of modern theatre, participated in the organization of cultural events, and some were active themselves as musicians, playwrights or writers. *Letnan kolonel* M. Nur Nasution, for instance, supported initiatives by Bokor Hutasuhut in the field of theatre. He paid the rent of the venues, wrote plays and guided the young actors. When LEKRA became active in Medan, the army increased its financial support to LEKRA's adversaries in an attempt to counteract LEKRA's political propaganda.[20]

Malay national literature in the fifties: the Singapore–Jakarta connection

In the same period, on the other side of the Malacca Straits, Singapore was developing into a hub of Malay political activism. The city

17 Bokor Hutasuhut has told how Siregar allegedly showed his disappointment at Bokor's refusal to follow in his teacher's (leftist) footsteps by not letting him pass his Indonesian language exams, on exactly the same day that Bokor won a national literature contest (Bokor Hutasuhut, personal conversation, October 2009).

18 After his move to Jakarta, he became member of the central board of LEKRA and head of Lembaga Seni Drama (LESDRA, the Institute of Dramatic Art under LEKRA).

19 Chalik Hamid, personal conversation and communication by e-mail, September 2008 and 2009; Bokor Hutasuhut, personal conversation, October 2009; Alie Soekardi, personal conversation, October 2009.

20 Bokor Hutasuhut, personal conversation, October 2009.

was outside the restrictive control by the Malay courts, so that new ideas that challenged the established order could be developed and disseminated. Moreover, technological innovations – especially in the publishing and film industries – found fertile ground and aided Malay nationalist cultural workers in their efforts to establish a Malayan nation (Barnard and Van der Putten 2009). There were several Malay nationalist writers from Singapore who maintained close personal relationships with key literary figures from modern Indonesian literature. These relations were formed in the framework of nationalism. The fundaments for this transnational literary network date back from before the war. Already in the 1920s, the young, nationalist, Malay reformist Muslims from rural areas, the so-called *kaum muda*, were inspired by anti-colonial literary writings from Indonesia. When these young nationalists in 1937 gathered in the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, Union of Malay Youth) – the first peninsula-wide Malay political organization – the KMM's paramount goal was the formation of an independent nation consisting of a united Malaya and Indonesia: Melayu Raya or Indonesia Raya.

Near the end of the war, the KMM gained momentum when the Japanese urged KMM leaders to make preparations for the Malayan Independence that seemed immanent. But when Soekarno and Hatta, pressured by young revolutionary nationalists, hastily proclaimed Indonesian Independence on 17 August 1945, they left their Malay 'brothers in arms' – with their plans for a Melayu Raya – empty-handed.

After the war, the struggle for Melayu Raya was continued by the Malay National Party (MNP) founded by KMM leaders Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Ishak Haji Muhammad and Ahmad Boestamam. But the party soon lost terrain to the conservative nationalist Malays of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Moreover, when the British declared the Malayan Emergency in 1948 in reaction to a communist armed revolt on 18 June, strict regulations regarding anti-British political activity paralyzed the MNP and made political activists flee to Singapore. When the party was formally banned in 1950, the struggle for Indonesia Raya came to an end (Soh 2005).

Such was the political background of most of the Malay nationalist writers that settled in Singapore around 1950. Budiawan, in his contribution to this volume gives an analysis of the contacts between these writers in Singapore and their Indonesian counterparts in Jakarta. Many of the Malays authors in Singapore were former MNP members and were highly influenced by Indonesian literature and Indonesian nationalist thought. Even the name of the Malay writers' association in Singapore, Angkatan Sastrawan 1950 (ASAS 50), was modelled after the name Angkatan 1945 (the

1945 Generation), which designated the new generation of Indonesian writers that emerged after the Second World War. Several ASAS 50 members had close personal relationships with contemporary Indonesian writers (see Budiawan, this volume).

As Barnard and Van der Putten (2009) have shown, for the Malay nationalists the Malay language and literature and its modernization were pivotal in the formation of a unified Malaya. The nationalists regarded Malay as the most suitable alternative to English, the latter being too tainted by the British colonial enterprise. It is interesting to note that these Malay writers of modern literature on the Malayan Peninsula turned to the established writers of modern Indonesian literature in Jakarta for inspiration, instead of to their fellow Malay writers on the east coast of Sumatra (who were, in their turn, oriented towards Jakarta as well). As far as I have been able to research, there is no data available that suggests the existence of personal links between writers of modern Indonesian literature in Medan, such as Bokor Hutasuhut, Hr. Bandaharo, Bakri Siregar, Sori Siregar and Herman KS, with the Malay writers of modern literature in Singapore. This is the more striking when one takes into account the fact that many of the Singapore writers were of leftist inclination. Before and during the war, there had been close ties between the communists on either side of the Straits; this makes the absence of links between the leftist writers of modern literature in Medan and Singapore even more remarkable. Moreover, the literary manifesto of ASAS 50 resembled that of LEKRA in its concern for the lives of the common people, but while LEKRA was a strong contender in Medan's cultural arena in the late 1950s, to date I have found no data to suggest contacts between Singapore ASAS 50 writers and leftist writers in Medan.

In his essay in this volume, Budiawan gives several reasons for this. First, in the early 1950s, LEKRA was still trying to gain ground in the Indonesian cultural field. This is supported by the statement of Astaman Hasibuan, former head of the Medan branch of LEKRA, that it was initially extremely difficult to convince artists in Medan and other North Sumatran cities to join LEKRA. Writers, in particular, were unwilling to sign up, as they did not need an organization's support to be able to write. Dancers, musicians and actors, on the other hand, were the first to commit themselves to LEKRA's cause, as their performances – in ensembles and theatre groups – benefited from LEKRA's organizational means.[21] Second, the national movement in Malaya was ultimately taken over by more conservative forces, marginalizing the left wing nationalists. Lastly, with UMNO's dominance in the national movement, the promo-

21 Astaman Hasibuan, personal conversation, 14-1-2009.

tion of 'Malayness' in relation to 'nationhood' was more important than the issue of social justice promoted by the leftist nationalists.

CLOSING REMARKS

After Indonesian independence, cultural workers in Jakarta and other cities on Java claimed a dominant role in the discussion about the construction of an Indonesian national culture. National media channelled their voices to reach all corners of the nation, including Medan. Artists and cultural critics from outside Java reacted at once and began to participate in the debate on and the construction of a homogeneous culture that would 'fit' all Indonesians as a comfortable garment. This formed the onset of a continuous exchange of ideas, literary products, critique, and cultural workers between Medan and Jakarta.

On the one hand, the nation's capital functioned as a magnet; it attracted young journalist/writers from Medan, well versed in the Malay language, and seeking career opportunities. A relatively large number of the writers and editors of the nation's newspapers and magazines originated from Medan and other parts from North Sumatra, and were able to influence the debate on national culture. It was particularly the leftist writers from Medan who later moved to Jakarta, such as Hr. Bandaharo, Agam Wispi and Bakri Siregar, who became important players in the national cultural field, especially from the early 1960s on when the Left got Soekarno's backing. From Jakarta and other cities in Java, writers, poets, and actors travelled to Medan to perform or give presentations on their work. In the 1950s, there was not yet the deep divide between the leftist and the other cultural organizations in Medan that characterized the early sixties. Friendly relations between artists of different political conviction, and cooperation between them in cultural activities prevailed. In such an atmosphere, it was not strange to find LEKRA icon Pramoedya Ananta Toer from Java giving a lecture at a Medan teacher training college where the majority of teachers were anti-communist.

At the same time however, Medan-based artists criticized, what they called, the 'arrogant' attitude of their colleagues in Jakarta. After having worked in Medan for more than a year, Aoh Karta Hadimadja concluded that Sumatran culture had nothing worthwhile to contribute to a national culture. Others in Java shared his opinion. This mentality, as is not hard to imagine, highly annoyed the Sumatrans.

But culture includes more than 'high' arts alone, and for a large number of Medan's inhabitants, Singapore was the cultural centre,

not Jakarta. The city formed part of a Malay transborder exchange network of urban areas with a large amount of cultural traffic between them. Its lines of exchange dated back to the first decades of the twentieth century, when *bangsawan* theatre groups from either side of the Straits toured the Malay world (Cohen 2002). The transborder cultural contacts in the 1950s were based on a sort of cosmopolitan-ethnic 'all-inclusive Malay' identity, and had nothing to do with Indonesian nation building, as was the case with the more serious Indonesian arts. Singers, actors and composers from Medan went to Singapore to work in the film industry, while the finished products – records and Malay movies – were imported by cinema directors and music stores in Medan. Besides film related cultural traffic, pulp fiction from Medan was printed in *jawi* script especially for the Malayan market.

The nationalist Malay writers in Singapore sought allegiance with their 'elder brothers' of the modern Indonesian nation, instead of with their fellow 'Malays' in Medan. It was the attraction of a modern nation-state and the role a national literature could play in the formation of a nation that made the Malays in Singapore turn to modern Indonesian literature. Indonesians and Malays were, after all – like the Malays living on both sides of the Malacca Straits, *bambu serumpun*, of the same stock.

After 1958, the cultural scene in Medan became increasingly politicized. Cooperation between members of LEKRA and LKN and the other cultural organizations gradually came to a halt. Newspapers backing the PKI openly pilloried the so-called *bourjuis* writers and actors, and banners with the names of targeted writers appeared in the streets. In 1964, many Medan writers/journalists lost their jobs, because they did not back the policy of the Indonesian Journalists' Union, (Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia, PWI) which by then was already taken over by the Left.

For a complete view of the cultural life in Medan in the 1950s, further research is needed. Besides the map drawn in this article, there existed other maps and/or exchange networks. Available sources suggest the existence of Chinese, Batak, 'traditional' Malay, and Islamic cultural circles. One might ask if and to what extent they formed part of exchange networks and whether or not they were mutually exclusive. Besides, until 1958, the Dutch influence on culture in Medan was considerable. Lastly, the backdrop of the Cold War puts Medan in a world perspective. An investigation into the cultural missions, visits and exchanges organized by the two power blocs in an attempt to spread their ideologies, and by Medan cultural workers themselves will throw more light on the nature of this international exchange network and its influence on local artists.

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15

New Sundanese dance for new stages

Irawati Durban Ardjo

In this essay I will discuss part of my life in dance, beginning with my experiences studying and performing dance in an era when conditions were very different to those of today both in Indonesia and abroad. My essay, unlike other contributions to this volume except for Melani Budianta's, are based on personal experience. While Melani's essay recounts her personal experience and the cultural life of Peranakan Chinese in Malang, a town in East Java, I am writing about the experience of a Sundanese dancer on the national stage and my travels abroad which influenced developments in the arts in Indonesia.[1]

When I came to write about this experience, I discovered many things of which I had previously been little aware. The time, during the Soekarno period, when I began to know dance, to love it and to participate in it so enthusiastically was in fact an important period in the young nation in its efforts to shape Indonesian-ness; as a people, as a nation and in the arts. President Soekarno was a statesman and an artist who loved the arts, particularly the dance of Indonesia's regions. The period that forms the timeframe of this book, 1950-1965, is fitting because we can consider it the period when the foundation pillars were set in the search for national culture and in awareness of the importance of regional arts within it. Furthermore, political and cultural contacts with the outside world resulted in a new context for regional dance and dancers, and new stages for them.

CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING ARTS

The life chapter I am writing about begins in 1948, when I returned to Bandung from our evacuation in 1946 during the revolution after

1 There is one small point of crossover, namely when Melani mentions the new dance *Kunang-kunang* (Fireflies). This dance was performed by the Viatikara group, of which I was a member, when it toured Malang in the 1960s.

South Bandung had been set alight. The Allied Forces had given the ultimatum that on 24 March 1946, all Indonesian soldiers and freedom fighters had seven hours (until midnight) to leave the southern part of the city of Bandung, now under Allied control. It was not only the soldiers and freedom fighters who rejected the return of the Dutch. The people united, and they were prepared to leave the city, burning storehouses and even their own homes so that they would not be used by the Dutch. My family joined those who evacuated, first to an area south of Bandung, then to Garut, Yogyakarta and Jakarta, finally returning to Bandung on 7 January, 1948.

In colonial times, the Sundanese lived in a highly stratified 'feudal' social system. Even though there were no longer kings in Priangan, their descendants had become *bupati* (regents) and lived like little kings. Their position and that of the aristocrats (*menak*) was far above the people. Relations between the two social groups were not equal; rulers were in the upper strata and servants in the lower strata. In between, were middle aristocrats and traders.

I was born in 1943, and lived in the time of early independence with traces of the 'feudal' code of conduct, which my mother then still instilled in her children (my father died eleven months after I was born, in 1944). This conduct included: bowing one's head and not speaking or looking around while eating; never contradicting elders and remaining silent and never interrupting when any elder was speaking; speaking politely and quietly; when walking in front of anyone older than oneself, bending over and keeping the right arm straight facing downwards, and if they were sitting on a mat, crouching as low as possible. The basic principle was that we were not to stand or sit higher than anyone older or anyone of respect. Females had to stay at home, and if they ventured outside of the home, they had to keep their gaze straight ahead, and not look around them or smile. My older brothers and sisters still had to make the sign of obeisance called *anun* (hands in prayer position raised to a bowed head, with the thumbs just touching the nose) whenever they gave anything to our grandfather. I have only vague memories of this.

In the era that followed, table rules and ways of communicating loosened up. Some loosened rules of etiquette spread downwards, such as the custom of bending one's body slightly and uttering '*punten*' (excuse me) when passing anyone at all which became part of Sundanese etiquette right to village level, and has endured. At the same time, by 1958 the requirement that females stay in the home, and rules for their behaviour, had relaxed considerably, which benefited me for Mother understood the need for me to attend many dance classes and performances outside of school activities. My rel-

ative freedom inspired envy in my older sisters. This was the beginning of my following the changing times through dance.

NEW WIND IN 1950S' BANDUNG

The world of dance I experienced as a child was under the tutelage of *ceu* (sister) Itim, my sister in law, who taught Arabic dances, the 'Balloon dance' to a Strauss waltz, and an 'Irian Samba' danced to a melody of the same name. I also took ballet lessons with Gina Meloncelli, a ballet teacher in Bandung of Italian descent. I was familiar with Sundanese dance via broadcasts on the Bandung station of the national radio, Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI). In the 1950s, if I am not mistaken, the classic *gamelan degung* melody *Pajajaran* was broadcast daily when RRI Bandung went to air. And on Sunday mornings, there was the stirring gamelan for Sundanese martial art called *kendang penca*. Apart from this, Sundanese dance was taught on radio, with dance instructions called out to the gamelan accompaniment. When my older sister tried to learn from this program, I would copy her movements. This was no easy matter because we couldn't understand all the phrases.

When in 1956 I began to study Sundanese dance more seriously after two previous unsuccessful attempts, it transpired that the dance I learnt from Rd. (Raden, a Sundanese aristocratic title) Tjetje Somantri at his school Badan Kesenian Indonesia (BKI, Body for Indonesian Arts, 1948-1958) was dance that was beginning to discard 'feudal' influences. The first dance I studied was the slow tempo *tari Dewi*, wearing a batik wrap-around cloth the edge of which was rolled and left to drape on the floor to be flicked right and left by the foot. The *tari Dewi* still had an aristocratic Sundanese feel with its elements of the *Tayub* dance (a male aristocratic dance) and *Badaya* (a female dance performed by noble families), but it also contained elements of Tjetje Somantri's own female dance style. (Subsequently, BKI often produced female dances in this new style that was named *wanda anyar*, with various characters and forms that had not existed previously).[2]

In his own account of the history of his dance school BKI, Oemay Martakusuma writes that in 1948, upon returning to Bandung from evacuation, those who established the school were himself, Tb. (for Tubagus, a title of nobility from Banten) Oemay Martakusuma as head, Rd. Barnas Prawiradiningrat (previously secretary to the Resident of Garut) as deputy head, and S.M. Thaher from West Sumatra

2 For more on Tjetje Somantri, Oemay Martakusumua, Badan Kesenian Indonesia and the history of Sundanese dance, see Irawati Durban Ardjo 2007 and 2008.

as secretary (Oemay Martakusuma 1977). Together they raised the profile of various regional arts, because during Dutch times these arts had been given no opportunity to develop. Their reason for doing so was to fortify youth against outside influences which they could see were surely to come. Books in the Sundanese language, the Indonesian-language journal *Budaya* and the Sundanese-language journal *Budaja* all discussed arts and culture in West Java.[3] The group established various arts courses, including Sundanese dance, gamelan, traditional sung poetry and *angklung*, Javanese dance and gamelan, dance and music from Sumatra and West Sumatra, Balinese dance and gamelan, painting (the group Jiva Mukti led by Barli) and drama. Young people flocked to attend these courses, especially school students, and also members of the Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture).[4]

Apart from the excitement of establishing courses in the arts in the early 1950s in West Java, another thing that felt new was the arrival of new opportunities for women in the arts. In colonial times, women from 'good' families were not permitted to dance in public, because this carried the connotation of prostitution from the tradition of *ronggeng* (female dancer-singers in folk performance). The positions of aristocrats and the people were far apart, and ordinary people were not permitted to learn or to enjoy the arts of the nobility. However, after independence, the spirit of democracy was strong at BKI. Through Tjetje's dance compositions, which were primarily designed for women, women from all social strata could learn dancing together at BKI, and they also danced in highly respectable performances before important personages.

It was not only women in Priangan who experienced these changed conditions, it seems. The situation was similar in Makassar, South Sulawesi, as Barbara Hatley discusses in this volume in relation to the experience of Andi Nurhani Sapada. Andi Nurhani Sapada's mission to perform the *Pakarena* dance, a mission that

3 The journal *Budaya* (in the Indonesian language) was published in Bandung by the office of the Department of Education, Training and Culture (Djawatan Pendidikan, Pengadjaran dan Kebudajaan, P.P. & K.) from 1948-1952. In November 1952 (edition number 28) the journal moved to Yogyakarta and the office of P.P. & K. took over the publishing, but renumbering issues from 1. The Bandung office of P.P. & K. continued to publish a journal in the Sundanese language, titled *Budaja*, with the issues starting from number 1.

4 An example of LEKRA's attention to West Javanese music can be found in Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin M. Dahlan (2009:10-12) where there are two photos reproduced from *Budaja* 13 (1956):23 of female LEKRA members at BKI practicing on gamelan instruments in wooden boxes rather than traditional low carved frames. Oemay designed these wooden boxes to make them easy for young people to carry, and also to raise the status of the musicians who sat on chairs to play, unlike the traditional instruments played by musicians who usually sat on the floor (interview with Oemay, 1976).

President Soekarno supported, was similar to Tjetje's. They both designed dances for women, a category that previously did not exist (other than dances for women from nobility) because previously women could not dance in public. And subsequently, through their efforts, dance for women flourished.[5]

MEETING NEW CHALLENGES: BKI AND NEW DANCES

Oemay, in his 'Overview of West Javanese arts' (*Selayang pandang tentang kesenian daerah Jawa Barat*), tells of the revolutionary times when he and Tjetje met each other again in Garut, which had become the Priangan capital (Tom 1952). With the assistance of the Secretary to the Priangan Resident, Rd. Barnas Prawiradiningrat, at the end of 1946 they renewed the activities of Sekar Pakuan, which Oemay, with the Bupati of Bandung as patron, had established in 1935 as a kind of arts society with all arts organizations in Bandung as members. When Japan occupied Indonesia in 1942, Sekar Pakuan was dissolved and became part of Keimin Bunka Shidoso, the cultural centre under the Information Office of the Japanese military government, with the new name Badan Kesenian Djawa Barat (BKDB, Body for West Javanese Arts). In 1947, an all-Indonesia congress of civil servants (*pamongpraja*) was held in Garut, led by President Soekarno. Following this, President Soekarno frequently held important events in Garut, with BKDB providing dance and drama entertainment for closing ceremonies.[6] Once the fighting had ceased, President Soekarno continued to support the performances of Oemay and BKI, which he considered fitting for entertaining foreign dignitaries. Every foreign dignitary who visited Indonesia had to watch BKI dance, in Bandung, at the state palace in Jakarta, or at the palaces at Cipanas and Bogor.

Both Tjetje Somantri the choreographer and Oemay Martakusuma who established BKI in 1948 and later became Head of the

5 There are also differences between them. Andi Nurhani Sapada was a girl from an aristocratic family, but was not familiar with music or dance because she had lived outside of her area from her youth, as her father worked in the area of Ambon (interview with Andi Nurhani Sapada, July 2009). However, the demands of the time for a dance that was uniquely from Makassar, particularly requested by President Soekarno, drove her, with the support of her husband who was Bupati in kabupaten Sidenreng, Rappang, to pioneer a South Sulawesi dance that was based on various traditional dances from various kabupaten. (See further Barbara Hatley's essay in this volume).Tjetje, on the other hand, was an expert on Sundanese dance who had studied all kinds of dance since 1911. President Soekarno liked his creations, and Tjetje was also supported in his work by Oemay as head of the local office of culture (Djawatan Kebudajaan Djawa Barat) and other experts who joined BKI.

6 Interview with Oemay Martakusuma, 1977.

Djawatan Kebudajaan Djawa Barat in 1950 when this office was established, were of nobility and had received their education at Dutch schools. Western taste and a modern aura are very evident in the dances they created. Oemay was driven by an ambition to create female Sundanese dance, which had not previously existed, and thus in the newly independent era he got the idea to 'ballet'ize Sundanese dance. Tjetje, who had mastered various forms of dance from Sunda, then translated this idea, including his creation of the Butterfly dance (*tari Kukupu*), which was made to look spectacular and 'modern' with the aid of Oemay's costume creations. Even the accompaniment was new, arranged by Kayat with songs and a new style of playing that gave the dance spirit.

Tari Kukupu was created in 1952 and performed for the first time at the conference of the World Health Organization at the Savoy Homann hotel in Bandung, on 3 September. Eight dancers rising and falling to the melancholic gamelan accompaniment, wearing beautiful brightly coloured costumes depicting the peaceful beauty of nature, was seen to be a perfect match to depict the natural beauty of Priangan. The dance movements were full of Sundanese dance idiom albeit with innovation, but the novelty of the dance was particularly in the concept, namely as a dance about a creature depicted for itself, and not connected with a human figure, as for instance is the case with dances with the Garuda bird or the deer in the Ramayana story.[7] The *Kukupu* dance became a must for President Soekarno when entertaining his guests, both for performances in Indonesia and touring in many cultural missions abroad.

GETTING TO KNOW ARTS FROM OTHER AREAS

When the Indonesian republic was newly independent, the state and President Soekarno required new official ceremonies, and with them came the need for art forms and ways of presenting them that were fitting for these new conditions. Traditional performance forms that had previously been local and watched only by local audiences were suddenly raised to the national and even international stage. The process of familiarization between regional artists who watched each other's skills broadened their horizons, and also made a highly significant contribution to the development of the arts from 1950 through to the early 1960s, as I myself experienced.

7 Interview with Dedi Djamhur, 2001.

State performances before President Soekarno were routine events in the 1950s and early 1960s. The performances took place on stages, on floor level, in the gardens of the State Palace (Istana Negara) or the Istana Merdeka, or at the Sports Stadium (Istana Olah Raga, Istora) at Senayan, Jakarta, where the audience sat in tiers surrounding the performers.

One important recurring performance was held annually at the Istana Negara to celebrate Independence Day on 17 August. Performances were held in the inner garden of the palace, after the dinner attended by high-ranking government officials, foreign ambassadors, and specially invited Indonesian and foreign guests. All the invited guests and their spouses attended. A variety of regional performances was presented on a specially constructed stage in the centre of the garden.

The program might begin with the *Gending Sriwijaya* dance from Palembang danced by five to seven dancers in resplendent red and gold regional costume, while the host President Soekarno greeted his guests and invited the most honoured guests to taste the betel nut carried by the dancers, who would dance with their long, thin gold fingernails, carrying the special tray. The beautiful sound of the singers would fill the area, creating an impression of the glory of the kingdom of Sriwijaya in days gone by. Another regional dance hailing from other royal halls was the *Pakarena* dance from Makassar, South Sulawesi, which Andi Nurhani Sapada had condensed. The nine dancers, wearing beautiful loose long blouses (*baju bodo*) and huge gold ornaments on their heads, chests and arms, moved gracefully and calmly, in contrast to the frenetic loud music of the drums and strident reed instrument, slowly waving small scarves and white fans that they held in their hands. The *Seudati* dance performed by twenty young Aceh youths appeared extremely energetic and exciting, dominating the space. With no musical accompaniment, only the singing of the dancers themselves led by the lead singer, the clicking of fingers, the slapping of bodies and stamping of feet, this dance from Aceh was thrilling. (Today the popularity of *Seudati* has been replaced by the *Saman* dance performed by dancers moving together while sitting in a line.) From Bali, the dance most often performed was the *Temulilingan*, which depicted a pair of bees, pliant and lively, accompanied by shrill gamelan music that pierced the night. Or the *Kecak* dance performed by dozens of male dancers seated while chanting and moving rhythmically in unison, which never failed to impress the audience. From Central Java there was the dance duet of the characters Bambangan and Cakil, or the *Gatotkoco* dance that displayed lively, strong-style dance technique. Bandung's offering was always the *Kukupu* dance. The atmo-

Irawati performing the *Topeng Koncaran* dance at the Savoy Homann Hotel in 1958. (collection Irawati Durban Ardjo)

sphere of the extensive palace gardens was enhanced by the arrival of eight brightly coloured butterflies fluttering around. It was at opportunities such as these that the artists began to get to know dances from other areas. This familiarization with and appreciation of the variety of Indonesian dance fostered a sense of pride in the diversity of Indonesia, and increased our love for regional dance.

Apart from the Independence Day performances, there were frequently receptions for state guests, held at the palace or in other venues, for instance in Bandung at the Savoy Homann hotel, the official residence of the Governor of West Java (Gedung Pakuan), or the Bumi Sangkuriang reception hall. I often danced at all these places. When in 1962 the construction of the sports stadium at Senayan (Istora Senayan) was completed for hosting international sports events, colossal performances were often included. I participated in the arts program of the Asian Games on 24 August 1962 and again at the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) on 10 November 1963. Tjetje appointed me as dance trainer and in charge of costumes for both these mass performances.

EXPERIENCE ABROAD

Apart from the opportunities to peek at each other's performances at the state occasions in Jakarta, which put us in awe of one another and encouraged us to study the arts of other regions, the preparation for cultural missions abroad gave us more extended opportunities for this, and were extremely important for getting to know one another and interacting on a personal level. This continued while we were abroad on tours that often lasted for months at a time.

In the Soekarno period, a large number of arts groups was sent abroad, as Jennifer Lindsay discusses in her essay in this volume. I went on seven of these missions, namely 1957 (Czechoslovakia-Hungary-Poland-Russia-Egypt), 1961 (The People's Republic of China (PRC)-North Korea), 1962 (Thailand), 1963 (Thailand-Taiwan), 1964 (USA-France-Holland) and twice in 1965 (Thailand, PRC-North Korea-Japan). I will relate some experiences that influenced my subsequent activities as a dancer, choreographer and dance teacher, as an example of the interaction between the experiences of artists abroad and developments in the arts in Indonesia at this time.

Before I went overseas for the first time with the cultural mission in 1957, an international sense was not entirely foreign to me. My

family spoke Dutch at home, and one of my mother's good friends was Dutch (Tante Luus whose home was packed full of antiques, from floor to ceiling). My experience at the Christian primary school (Santa Ursula) and at Santa Angela junior high school and high school through to 1961 with Indonesian, Dutch and German teachers and strict tuition in English, French and German, had inadvertently created an international atmosphere around me. The ballet films *The dying swan* and *The red shoes* also fanned my dream to become a ballerina, and I dabbled with ballet lessons for four months.

When my teacher, Tjetje Somantri came to the house to ask me to join the cultural mission overseas, my mother was dubious and asked my older brother's opinion. He replied: 'Let her go, because we will probably never be able to pay for her to go abroad.' And so it was that I joined rehearsals and was prepared for travel abroad together with my dancer friends Indrawati Poerwo and Karmilah, the male dancer Dida Hasanuddin, and Kandi the drummer. Oemay made our dance costumes especially for us, we were given matching suitcases, and the tour managers in Jakarta made our uniform woollen coats.

My first tour abroad was to East Europe and Egypt for three months from July to October 1957, and for me, still a child, it opened windows on the world and made a deep impression. The other dancers, musicians and singers were adult, but we three Sundanese dancers were just 13 (Indra) and 14 (Karmilah and myself) years old.

Before we departed, we had rehearsals one or two afternoons in Jakarta at Jalan Pegangsaan Timur 56, on the back terrace of the house where Indonesia's independence had been proclaimed. Every region showed what it was going to perform abroad. From Java there was the *Kudo-kudo* dance by two male dancers, the *Golek* dance by two beautiful female dancers, and the *Bambangan-Cakil* dance by a male and female dancer. I was amazed at the suppleness of the *Cakil* dancer. Then it was our turn. Kandi the drummer had to perform with Javanese musicians, but he had already rehearsed with them three years earlier in Yogyakarta for one month before the 1954 cultural mission to China. The gamelan sounded dreadful, unco-ordinated and clanging, because apart from Kandi none of the musicians was Sundanese, and the instruments were also not Sundanese but Javanese, and they are different. All we could do was follow the drum. Dida Hasanuddin had to do the same with his dance, which was also jarring. Luckily, Kandi's dynamic and steady drumming saw him through, and enlivened Dida's strong dancing.

From North Sumatra, there were four female dancers accompanied by accordion and drum. They danced *Tanjung katung*, *Serampang XII*, *Ma'Inang* and *Hitam manis* with gentle but agile movement, their arms swaying. Their dance looked very different to the Javanese and Sundanese dances with their complex hand, head, and body movements, and feet rooted more solidly to the ground.

At the end, all dancers came together to learn to sing Batak songs together with Gordon Tobing, and with him accompanying on guitar. We sang various Batak songs like *Sing-sing so*, *Sigule pong*, *Butet*, *Nasonang do hita na dua* and *Rege-rege* and ended with the Indonesian song composed by Ismail Marzuki, *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*. When we were on tour abroad, dancers would appear on stage to sing with Gordon Tobing, and this part of the program was popular with audiences. At the curtain call, the entire ensemble would sing *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*. But our singing wasn't limited to the stage. When we were in the bus, or whenever the mood and time was right, Gordon and his guitar would call us to sing, and this too fostered a feeling of intimacy between the members of the group, and with the local organizing committee.

Our first destination was Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia. We performed at the Smetana Theatre, where the stage was wider than anything we had ever experienced before. We three Sundanese dancers followed the floor pattern that Oemay had taught us, and our *Sulintang* or *Golek* dance always opened the program. The audience applauded enthusiastically when we finished, and we had to return to take another bow. Perhaps it was because we were still so young, and we took our bows shyly. When we were not performing ourselves, and while standing in the wings, we could watch the whole evening's program. And at the end of it all, we went back on stage to sing together for the close of the performance, to the audience's applause.

City after city we passed through, country after country; Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, USSR and Egypt. We toured for three months showing the beauty of Indonesia's arts to attract the world's support for the young nation.

WATCHING PERFORMANCES

Apart from performing ourselves, we also watched various kinds of performances. We saw various kinds of European folk dancing, with lively leg and feet movement, jumping and stamping. Dozens

of dancers danced together on one stage executing movements in unison, with energetic music and song, and wearing big, heavy costumes. The women's voices sounded as though it was forced from their throats. The songs depicted the beauty of the hills, valleys, stony mountains and tidy woods of Europe, all so totally different from unruly, expansive tropical forests and intermittent patches of rice fields.

It was difficult for us to differentiate the folk dances from the four Eastern European countries we visited, apart from the costume and decoration. Our immediate impression was that they all involved unison movement with almost identical leg movements, the dancers sometimes moving very closely together, holding each other by the hand or around the waist, with happy expressions as they sang. Sometimes the male dancers would move more adroitly and leap up. All the dancers wore shoes, high socks, and kicked their legs. They ran, leapt forward and back, and could move rhythmically from one floor pattern to the next.

This was all totally different from our classical dance, where male and female dancers must not touch each other, where the female dancers must keep their gaze low, their smiles stifled, and never, ever show their teeth. Our feet were shoeless and slid gently, taking slow steps in various patterns, and in a tempo that never allowed for running.

When we attended orchestral concerts with over 50 musicians performing music by famous composers like Mozart, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, only a few of us understood. On the whole, we tried to enjoy such performances while watching the way the violin and cello players all moved as one, together with the other instruments under the direction of the conductor with his baton.

When we watched opera or operettas, the musicians were down in the orchestra pit. The stage had more interesting decoration, with backdrops, lighting, and other effects. And then there were the entries and exits of the performers in their various costumes, their acting in small and large groups, sets that changed slowly while the curtain was still up or dramatically while the curtain was down, and the beautiful singing, booming out rich and loud, or long, trembling high notes.

Russia (the USSR) was famous as the centre of ballet. At the Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in Moscow, *Swan lake* transported us to another world, a world of magical dreams that we had never before imagined. Scenes moved fluidly from one to the next, and left us deeply impressed. The music, the staging, the dance, the acting, the floor patterns, the costumes, the technical stage effects – all of these kept us wide-eyed, hearts skipping

Watching *Swan lake* in Moscow, 1957. Irawati is second from left.
(collection Irawati Durban Ardjo)

a beat. When the performance was over, it was as though we had truly woken from a beautiful dream, between consciousness and half-dreaming.

Apart from dance and music, in Leningrad we watched world-class circus, the performance form loved by all ages. The atmosphere in the tent was totally different. All kinds of attractions were rolled out. We were impressed and entertained by the lighting, the sound, the movement of the circus performers, the animals and the clowns.

When we were in Egypt at an evening reception, we three Sundanese dancers were seated right at the edge of the stage. After the dinner was over, a pretty belly-dancer appeared, twisting and undulating her body. Her costume exposed her belly and hips, to show the supple and sensual movement. This dance was very different to the performances we had seen in the other countries. It had a strange beauty, but when the dancer moved her belly muscles and hips, we were so astonished we got the giggles.

We visited all kinds of performance venues, as well as museums, palaces, pyramids and historical sites, and saw statues, carvings, paintings, handicrafts and amazing parks. All these experiences made us aware that natural beauty and artistic beauty are universal.

GLIMPSING BEHIND THE SCENES

Apart from watching performances, in some countries we were also taken to see the arts training behind the scenes. In Czechoslovakia we visited SLUK (Slovensky Ludovny Umelecky Kolektif) in Bratislava, a school for folk music and dance housed in an ancient castle-like building outside the city. We were warmly greeted by elaborately dressed dancers in heavy embroidered costumes that weighed between 5-10 kilograms. We then watched them perform in a grand hall. Indonesia was not strange to this group. They had first toured Indonesia in 1954, performing in Jakarta, and again in January 1957. On this second visit they had performed in Bandung at the Chung Hua Tsung Hui building, but I did not manage to see them.

In the Soviet Union we were taken to one section of a row of buildings in Moscow. The building did not look unusual, but it turned out to be a ballet school, perhaps Bolshoi. We were invited to watch ballet classes, with children of different ages taught in different groups, from those aged about ten through to teenagers. The students stood at the *barre*, wearing short, light rehearsal costumes, socks and ballet shoes. A teacher would give a command, and they would follow with simple, short movements to the accompaniment of a piano played in the corner of the room. They moved together in an orderly, uniform way. Their bodies were led gradually through dance movements of increasing technical difficulty.

THE IMPACT OF TOURS ABROAD

The impact of so many experiences in various trips abroad was not one-off, but like a snowball effect. My first tour, at such a young age, whether or not I realized it made me aware of my own existence amongst so much variety; of art, personalities, ethnicities, nations, customs, cultural settings and the nature that shaped them. The experience of travelling abroad frequently, of meeting, mixing with and watching arts from other countries, or from other areas of Indonesia at the Istana Negara and at the training centre before we left on the cultural missions, all, consciously or not, imprinted upon and influenced the arts we practiced.

Our preparation at the training centre before departure had many advantages, both for the Department of Education, Train-

ing and Culture and for the artists themselves. For the former, as the body in charge of the cultural missions, the training offered the opportunity to ensure the quality of the performances matched expectations and that they were compact and well coordinated. Secondly, the training centre experience fostered a sense of family between the members of the mission, which ensured that performances were of optimal standard.

For the artists themselves, the training experience gave them the opportunity to examine their own shortcomings and appreciate the skills of others. Secondly, artists increased their own knowledge about ways to improve the quality of performance. Thirdly, they could better appreciate the arts of other places in Indonesia. This appreciation of different beauty and techniques occurred spontaneously, without any deliberate direction, particularly because we had to help others during their performances; and fourthly, the training provided a source of many ideas, and honed our creativity and artistic sensitivities.

Dancing on professional stages abroad was another new experience for us. The stages were expansive and clean, the equipment complete, and we could sense the audience's connection with the performers because they were able to watch attentively. I felt at home on such stages, and could give my performance full expression, unlike performance conditions in Indonesia which were rarely like this, except for the stage at the Istana Negara.

My respect for the performances I observed of other amazing dancers on the missions, as well as the extraordinary artists on professional stages performing before audiences that watched so attentively, gradually influenced my own ideals and my own performance on stage. All my movements became more 'sensed', and my facial expression was no longer bland, but followed the movements and dynamics of the dance. The facial expression of Sundanese dance, which is usually restrained and invisible, was no longer really valid for me. The moment I heard the dance accompaniment and song, my face would react together with the dance movement and character. This might also have been the influence of watching and learning Balinese dance.

When I performed the *Kandagan* dance, the dynamics of which was between refined, agile and strong, my expression would follow automatically. In the *tari Merak* (Peacock dance) that depicted a peacock's pride in the beauty of its tail, the expression of pride had to be evident in both the dancer's face and body. And with dance in refined style, the same was true. The sense of refinement seemed to flow outwards from the 'heart' to the muscles and nerves, moving the hands and the whole body in a fluid way.

For group dancing, witnessing the tightness and strong unison of movement of folk dancing in Eastern Europe, China and Korea made us aware that in executing group dancing we had to appear as though a single person seen in many reflections. This was something that inspired me when I gave training in group dancing, from the shape and feel of the dance, to the movements of the hands, body, head and eyes.

Apart from the tight unison of both European folk dancing and *Swan lake*, I observed complex floor patterns in dance. Attention to clean transitions from one floor pattern to the next using clean movement and distance, assisted me when my teacher Tjetje Somantri suddenly asked me to help with preparations for the 'colossal' dance *Sri Gati* (depicting rice planting) by 24 dancers for the Asian Games in 1962 and the *Srenggana* dance (Red ant dance) by 30 dancers for Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) in 1963. The performance stage was unusual, namely the huge sports stadium at Senayan (Gedung Istora) in Jakarta, and the performance was for an invited audience that included President Soekarno and all the Games participants from various countries.

INFLUENCE ON SUNDANESE DANCE

As an example of the interrelationship between the development of dance in Indonesia (Sunda) and participation in cultural missions abroad, I will explain two personal experiences, because my own choreography was significantly influenced by my travels as a member of the Soekarno era cultural missions. The first example is my choreography of the *tari Merak* (Peacock dance), and the second is the influence of my nationalistic awareness in forming the Viatikara group, with its 'new Indonesian dances' ('*tari Indonesia baru*') in fresh, attractive style in the form of 'modern Indonesian national dance drama' ('*sendratari nasional Indonesia modern*', the word *sendratari* coming from *se*ni-*dra*ma-*tari*) which was extremely popular at the time.

The first Sundanese dance I arranged was the *tari Merak* based on Tjetje's dance from 1955. I had been appointed dance trainer for the Sundanese group in the Indonesian contingent for the second year of the New York World's Fair (1965). As it turned out, Indonesia withdrew from the New York World's Fair in 1965 in protest at the participation of Malaysia (this was the height of Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia), and the artists did not tour to

New York. The dance that was to be taken to New York was first performed in North Korea, as part of the (1965) presidential cultural mission to North Korea, PRC and Japan.

In 1964, the first year of the New York World's Fair (April-October) in which Indonesia did participate, the Sundanese program had included the *Kukupu* dance. As a change from this for the second year, I remembered my teacher's *Merak* dance, which had not been very popular. I found peacocks beautiful and graceful. I had studied this dance with Tjetje Somantri, but did not like it because I thought it did not capture the spirit of the peacock, either in the movement or the costumes. I was determined to rediscover this dance, and I began to explore the movements on my own.

For instance, I took the step known as *keupat* used in the *Sulintang* dance and added bird-like movements for the hands, head and body, drawing on Balinese and Sundanese dance and ballet, and this became a new step known as *keupat merak*. I particularly liked a

Tari Merak (Peacock dance), Tjetje Somantri's version.
(collection Irawati Durban Ardjo)

movement of the body leaning deeply to the left and then twisting to the right as found in the Balinese *Temulilingan* dance created by I Mario. As the peacock's body is naturally tilted, not rigid, I took this technique and matched it with a hand movement, open with quivering fingers, and finally with feet movement influenced by ballet, with one foot on tiptoe and the other raised.

Ballet was one style of dance that fascinated me. As mentioned above, I had visited the Bolshoi ballet school in 1957. The grace, suppleness, power and dynamics of ballet always captivated me, and I could relate personally to its difficult acrobatic technique that seemed essential to ballet. Whenever I watched either live performances or films of ballet, I imitated the movement until I felt I 'got it'. Thus, when I came to choreograph the *Merak* and other dances, I incorporated elements of ballet.

Tjetje had given the example of the foot movement, *trisik*, in the *Sulintang* dance, with a full turn taken over a few steps. I added the *pirouette*, or full turn in one step, at the beginning of the *trisik* movement in the *Merak* dance. To complete this move, I adopted the essence of a movement I had seen in the African Kaswari bird dance at the South African pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964. The bird would move the base of its wings near the shoulders when it opened and closed its wings. I used this movement, which was also widely adopted in American modern dance, for the shoulders as the dancers spread the peacock tail at the end of the *trisik* step. There were also other elements of ballet that I inserted to strengthen the graceful and proud character of the peacock.

The process of creating this dance was swift. Together with the gamelan musicians, it took only three afternoons, while joking with my friends who were my models. To accompany the *kokoer* (scratching) movement, I asked Kayat to use the other end of the *bonang* sticks, so that the wood against bronze, played at fast tempo, would give a clear sound like Balinese gamelan to accompany the fast steps. Tjetje had already pioneered the adoption of dance movement from other areas, stressing that these movements had to meld into Sundanese dance, and should not look like collage. His *Sulintang* dance contained elements of Balinese, Javanese, Burmese and Indian dance, but the audience saw it as Sundanese.

When it came to designing the costumes, I wanted the beauty and elegance of the peacock seen clearly in the costume. The dance properties had to reinforce the dance movements. This was the first time my sister-in-law, *ceu* Itim, later known as Ibu Kusumah, made peacock costumes following my designs. The artist Barli designed the motifs for the tail and the body feathers.

In Tjetje's *Merak* dance, the dancers held the flying peacock wings as they executed the *trisik* step. In my version, I wanted to highlight the tail display as the source of the bird's charm. But the tail points up, and if the costume were made like that it would interfere with the movement. I searched for another idea. In the People's Republic of China, the peacock dance I had seen was performed by seven dancers wearing a wide, flowing light green dresses with feather-motif at the base. I found this costume not 'peacock' enough. My idea was that the feather motif also had to be visible on the torso. The peacock tail motif should be seen on the cloth, and the semi-circular tail display shown by the dancers holding the cloth draping from their shoulders, using both hands as they executed the *trisik*. The movement had to be full of pride. The peacock's was represented with a tall headpiece topped with three points.

In this way, and with such ease, the *Merak* dance was conceived and performed. The first costumes were designed for the Viatikara group that was supposed to perform at the New York World's Fair in 1965. I later developed the dance further, adding three more movements, at the invitation of Aang Kuneafi, the wife of the Governor of West Java, for a performance by 12 dancers at the 25th anniversary of the Asia-Africa Conference, held in Bandung in 1980. Since 1965, this dance has remained popular with the public and is still frequently performed for formal and informal events both in Indonesia and abroad. In 2006, the office of Tourism and Culture (Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan) made the dance an official icon of West Java.

THE SEARCH FOR DANCE FORMS FOR A NEW INDONESIA

When Indonesia was newly independent, those at the forefront of the arts, working either independently or collectively in cultural, political, religious or other groups, were searching for ways to be innovative in Indonesian dance, as the time demanded and according to their own particular missions and visions. This was also true of Bandung. From the 1950s, the new republic was searching and striving for a form of unity in art that, it was hoped, would bind Indonesian-ness from the many scattered areas of the archipelago. The Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) back in 1928 had stated: One nation, one people, and the language of unity, Indonesian. In the 1950s, people had begun to wonder, was there such a thing as 'Indonesian dance' that could be danced by all the peoples of the archipelago?

As it happened, the new choreography by Sauti from Medan in 1956 based on Malay dance and called *Serampang XII* (the name was usually written with roman numerals) was accepted as a national Indonesian dance. I wanted to know why this could happen, and whether it was because the source of the Indonesian language was Malay. Actually, the dance had been the initiative of the Department of Education, Training and Culture in Jakarta, and taught by Sauti in Bandung, Jakarta and many other places. I myself had the opportunity to learn Malay dance taught by Sauti in 1958 at courses organized by the West Java P.P. & K. office in Bandung. The dance caught on, and many young people opened *Serampang XII* courses, which culminated in *Serampang XII* competitions held at village, municipal and even national level.

The enthusiasm for innovating traditional dance by giving it new form and placing it in a new position seemed to affect many places; Sunda (Tjetje), Makassar (Nurhani), Malay (Sauti) and Bali (I Mario). The dance group Viatikara in Bandung, however, seeing the way that *Serampang XII* had been adopted in so many places in Indonesia, pursued the drive to find Indonesian dance forms in a different way, namely through its attempts to fuse various elements of regional dance into a new, fresh 'nationalistic' form.

At the time, even though I was still Tjetje's student and dancer, I had widened my arts activities and moved from strictly Sundanese dance to new creations (*kreasi baru*) with the Viatikara group which since 1959 had been led by Drs. Barli Sasmitawinata and the choreographer Paul Kusardy Polim. Barli was a painter who had been part of the Sekar Pakuan group from 1935, together with others of his colleagues from the Kelompok Lima Bandung (Bandung Group of Five) including Affandi, Wahdi, Hendra Gunawan and Sudarso. They had remained with Oemay at the Keimin Bunka Shidoso during the Japanese occupation through to the early BKI days. Paul Kusardy was a student in the economics department of Parahyangan University in Bandung who studied ballet, and Sumatran and Javanese dance.

I enjoyed working with the Viatikara group, because at the time all artists were madly following the trend to find a new colour for Indonesian art. Paul Kusardy's new creations had elements of traditional dance and ballet, which provided an outlet for the dance movement my own body had absorbed (Sundanese, Malay, ballet), and I was also able to contribute to ideas about new dance movement. As a young person, I could move freely mixing these elements without giving any one too much emphasis. The accompanying music, too, was created with Western instruments (the Togaso Band) together with Sundanese flute and drum, and singing.

As was fitting for its Sanskrit-sounding name that meant something like 'blend', Viatikara's dances were varied in form but all had a strong traditional colour. Various elements of regional dance were adopted and fashioned by inserting other elements which made the work seem new and fresh, both conceptually and in performance. With the uncomplicated thinking of the time and within the limits of our knowledge about choreography and music, we took regional dance movements, ballet, regional songs and Indonesian songs, and mixed them in the search for a colour of new Indonesian dance that was more dynamic and 'modern'; (in those days, something that was new and had Western influence was called 'modern'). Prior to 1964, Viatikara's name was initially 'Sendratari Nasional/Indonesia Modern' (modern national/Indonesian dance drama).

Viatikara's dances were born full of enthusiasm and high ideals: dances like the *tari Petik* (Tea-picking dance, Sunda); *Kupu dan bunga* (Butterflies and flowers, Sunda-Indonesia), *Kunang-kunang* (Fireflies, Sunda-Indonesia), *Putri gunung* (Mountain princess, Java), *Rebana* (Sunda, Sumatra, ballet), *Angin timur* (Wind from the East, Sunda-Sumatra-Bali), *Kuda lumping* (Hobby-horse, Sunda-Betawi), *Potong padi* (Rice-harvesting, Sunda-Indonesia), *Nelayan* (Fishermen, Sunda-Indonesia) and dance dramas (*sendratari*) such as *Hari yang cerah* (Bright day, Minang-Batak-Ambon) and *Lutung Kasarung*. The audiences who watched them were just as enthusiastic as the performers. The uniqueness of Viatikara's performances was that they were always compact and were a whole, from the dancers, singers, musicians, the simple artistic decor, high quality lighting and sound, and the energetic performers and crew. Many young dancers in other regions later copied this style of dance and presentation.

In the early 1960s, the Bayanihan group from the Philippines visited Bandung. The dances they performed were of great interest. The ethnic flavour was still strong, but with a romantic Spanish influence. The impression they gave was of a mix between tradition and the West, rather like what Viatikara was doing. This helped strengthen our resolve that Viatikara was on the 'right track' in the search for 'new Indonesian dance'. Bayanihan's elegant, light style was similar, although the costumes were different. Bayanihan appeared in the elaborate richness of Philippine and Spanish tradition, whereas Viatikara, in keeping with the context of the time which tended towards modern-traditional, used simple properties with no ornament at all. Barli, the leader of our group and also costume designer, created simple, modern costumes from cotton in plain contrasting colours, but fashioned using traditional elements.

In fact, these costumes were in keeping with the themes of 'the people' and 'work' that were then in vogue and influenced by the politics promulgated by the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI), which was influential through its affiliated cultural organization, LEKRA.[8]

In relation to this popular spirit of the time, Viatikara, even though it had no link to LEKRA ideologies, was also influenced by the visiting arts groups from PRC and Vietnam that performed in Bandung. Their *Farmer's dance* and *Tea-picking dance* inspired Kusardy Polim to create similar dances. The program for Indonesia's 1965 Presidential Cultural Mission to PRC and North Korea was dominated by dance with 'work' and 'heroic' themes commissioned by the Minister of Education, Training and Culture, Professor Dr. Priyono as the group leader. Responding to the demand for such thematic dances, Yogyakarta prepared the *Batik* dance, Bali had the Weaving dance (*tari Tenun*) and Fishermen's dance (*tari Nelayan*). I prepared the *Sri Gati* dance from Sunda for five dancers similar to the one that had been performed at the Asian Games. My answer to the demand for a heroic theme was to change the solo dance of Ratu Graeni practising wielding her kris to the *Suraningpati* dance by five heroic female warriors, to heighten the rhythm of the gamelan accompaniment, and expand the play with the *kris*.

INFLUENCE ON THE TEACHING OF SUNDANESE DANCE

I began to feel the need for a method of physical training for Sundanese dance when I saw that not all students could easily follow the dance movements. I then recalled the basic training that I had seen in Moscow and in Thailand.

Both classical ballet and Thai classical dance require rehearsal exercises that must be introduced incrementally to achieve flexibility and train difficult dance technique. In ballet, execution of an arabesque or the splits requires long, difficult practice. So too with the classical Thai dance I saw at the Royal Dance Academy in Bangkok. Students whose fingers were not flexible enough had to practice bending their fingers against the wall, pushing the whole

8 Basically, in LEKRA's view, dance that grew alongside human life, had to become an artistic product that had purpose for human life. The power of dance to grow and develop also had to be in harmony with the development of society, capable of arousing revolutionary spirit, and national in form. In the renovation of regional dance to become national dance, progressive-revolutionary artists had to consider the ideological side, not merely the artistic side (Rhoma D.A.Yuliantri and Muhidin M. Dahlan 2008:394, 400).

weight of their bodies until the fingers could reach back and touch the hand. Those who could not yet stand with their bent knees and feet open making a perfectly straight line, had to stand at the wall and every day a friend gradually pushed their knees until they were flush against the wall.

In the dance of Viatikara or in Sundanese dance, there is no such difficult technique. Nevertheless, adapting to the needs of the time and in order for students to learn to dance more quickly, I thought that physical exercises should be considered and tried by isolating the movement technique most frequently used by different parts of the body. These exercises were to loosen up the muscles and joints and to make the body absorb the movements and store them in physical memory.

ONGOING INFLUENCE

The influence of the state performances and the cultural missions I outlined above, was not something subsequently swallowed by time. The memory of events that made such an impression continued to influence the steps I took and the challenges I faced thereafter. The example of President Soekarno's intense interest in Indonesian arts, his appreciation and pride in them, in both national and international forums, fostered a similar feeling in arts lovers and artists, including myself. His enthusiasm for the existence and development of traditional regional art infected my concern that these arts might be crushed by undirected progress. In an attempt to give some direction, apart from creating new choreography, I also concentrated on the teaching of dance to younger generations at primary and junior high schools as well as at my own Pusbitari dance studio.

The dance of the Soekarno era has long past, and many people have forgotten it, particularly because of the political situation and the cultural policy in Indonesia which changed radically after the 30 September-1 October 1965 coup and the beginning of General Soeharto's 'New Order' in 1966. But actually, the artistic seeds which, in the 'Old Order', were planted in the hearts of artists from all over Indonesia who were invited to perform before President Soekarno, in their own regions or at the state palace, in Jakarta or on cultural missions abroad, continues to bear fruit as experience that strongly influenced both them personally and the development of the arts in Indonesia.

Translated from Indonesian by Jennifer Lindsay

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16

LEKRA and ensembles
Tracing the Indonesian musical stage

Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri

The ceremonial reading of the proclamation of Independence on 17 August 1945 signaled a new era for Indonesia. This ceremony without precedent occurred together with the raising of the Red and White flag, and the singing of the anthem 'Indonesia Raya'.[1]

The proclamation of independence signalled the search for characteristics of a national culture. The birth of 'Indonesia' is inseparable from politico-diplomatic struggle, physical revolution, and cultural revolution. Cultural revolution within the field of music was marked by the birth of the poetry of struggle and nationalist propaganda. Music that was 'politically conscious' and that contained 'propagandistic' nuances was already familiar in Indonesia, with roots dating to the Japanese Occupation. In 1943, for example, Japan established the Keimin Bunka Shidoso (Cultural Centre) in Jakarta, and instructed artists to support the war efforts of Dai Nippon by creating propaganda songs (Eritha Rohana Sitorus 2009:40-2; Aiko Kurasawa 1993:229-59). In addition to carrying out their 'formal mission' for the Japanese government, artists also created works for the independence movement. One example is the composer Cornel Simanjuntak who is well known for his patriotic songs.[2] In the 1945-1966 era, the air was thick with music conscious about politics, nation, political parties, the people, the revolutionary struggle and diplomatic language.

1 See Pramoedya Ananta Toer et al. 1999:18. The song 'Indonesia Raya' is a march composed by Wage Rudolf Supratman (W.R. Supratman). It was first sung at the Youth Congress on 28 October 1928, and later adopted as the Indonesia's national anthem even though it had since undergone changes both in its lyrics and melody. See further Rudolf Mrázek 1994:45.

2 Manik 1952. Cornel Simanjuntak was born in 1921 in Pematang Siantar, North Sumatra, and died in Yogyakarta in 1946. In 1945-1946 he joined the armed struggle against the Allies. Several of his compositions are still remembered, for example: *Tanah tumpah darah* (Land for which we shed our blood), *Maju tak gentar* (Advance, unflinching), *Citra mekar melati* (Image of the blossoming jasmine), *O angin, kupinta lagi* (Oh, wind, I ask once more), *Pada pahlawan* (To the heroes), *Teguh kukuh berlapis baja* (Firm and strong, wrapped in steel), *Indonesia tetap merdeka* (Indonesia free forever), *Sorak sorak gembira* (Cheer, cheer joyously).

This focus of this essay will be a discussion about the dynamics of the Indonesian music promoted by the Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, the Institute of People's Culture) in the late 1950s and early 1960s, together with the activity of the music and dance ensembles that flourished on the stage of Indonesian culture during the Soekarno era.

LEKRA's activities, especially in the fields of literature and art, have been the subject of much writing. This essay is a modest effort to approach and study the music that LEKRA and the choral ensembles gave voice to, and draws upon written sources, especially the newspaper *Harian Rakjat* [3] supplemented with other supporting written sources such as *Mimbar Indonesia,*[4] and oral sources (interviews with several musicians of the 1950-1965 period, especially from the early 1960s). The communist daily newspaper *Harian Rakjat* is the primary source I draw on because of the lack of data available on this topic. Of course, given that *Harian Rakjat* is the chief source, the role of LEKRA in the field of music will appear rather large. To obtain a more balanced picture, a study using a more comprehensive and complete set of sources will be necessary.

LEKRA AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PATH OF INDONESIAN MUSIC

After the August 1945 revolution, Indonesia was searching for a national cultural identity. In the course of this search, the cultural organization called LEKRA emerged, its founding proclaimed by D.N. Aidit, M.S. Ashar, A.S. Dharta, and Njoto on 17 August 1950.[5] LEKRA was intended as an organization that would gather

3 *Harian Rakjat* (*HR*), the Indonesian Communist Party's (PKI) newspaper, provided space for LEKRA's artists to discuss cultural matters. *HR* was first published on 31 January 1951 under the name *Suara Rakjat.* One of the members of the editorial board was Njoto, who was also one of LEKRA's founders.

4 *Mimbar Indonesia* (*MI*) was a magazine that was first published in 1947 and continued publication until 1966. For a detailed discussion on *Mimbar Indonesia,* see Els Bogaerts in this volume.

5 'Laporan umum pengurus pusat LEKRA kepada Kongress Nasional ke I LEKRA', *Harian Rakjat,* 31-1-1959. See further Keith Foulcher (1986:20) who lists the six members of the initial LEKRA Secretariat: A.S. Dharta, M.S. Ashar, Herman Ardjuno, Henk Ngantung, Njoto and Joebaar Ajoeb. A.S. (Adhi Sidharta) Dharta (1924-2007), a writer who also wrote under many pseudonyms including Klara Akustia and Jogaswara, was LEKRA's first General Secretary until 1959. After the 1965 coup, he was imprisoned from 1965-1978. Njoto (1927-1965), a musician and writer, was elected to the Communist Party's five-member polit bureau in 1951 but was fired from his position as its Deputy Head II in 1964. He disappeared, presumed murdered, in 1965. The artist Henk Ngantung (1921-1991), held administrative positions within LEKRA and was Governor of Jakarta in 1964. He escaped imprisonment after 1965.

and strengthen the ties of national culture and strongly support the Revolution. As stipulated in LEKRA's *Mukadimah* (Preamble, 1950): 'The failure of the August 1945 Revolution meant also the failure of the struggle by cultural workers to destroy the colonial culture and replace it with a democratic culture, a People's culture'.[6] This stance became even clearer when LEKRA's Secretary General Joebaar Ajoeb[7] delivered the general report of the Central Secretariat of the organization before the participants of LEKRA's first National Congress in Solo in 1959:

> Lekra was founded in 1950 due to an awareness of the essence of the August 1945 Revolution and of the connection between the Revolution and culture. An awareness that the Revolution has great significance for culture and, at the same time, on the other hand, culture has great significance for the August Revolution.[8]

From the outset, LEKRA affirmed its nature as an open organization in the sense of being open to any artistic trend, and to working with any cultural organization with a similar ideology.[9] This was explained in LEKRA's Mukadimah (1950):

> The attitude of a People's Culture to foreign cultures is in no way one of enmity. The essence of progressive foreign cultures will be drawn on as much as possible in furthering the development of an

6 Foulcher 1986:213. 'Gagalnya Revolusi Agustus 1945 berarti juga gagalnya perjuangan pekerja kebudayaan untuk menghancurkan kebudayaan kolonial dan menggantikannya dengan kebudayaan yang demokratis, dengan kebudayaan Rakyat' (Foulcher 1986:209) (modern spelling as in Foulcher).

7 Joebaar Ajoeb was born in 1926 in Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra, and died in Bandung in 1996. In 1959 President Soekarno appointed him as a member of the DPR-GR/MPRS RI (parliament). He was elected Secretary General of LEKRA at its first plenary session on 28 January 1959 in Solo, Central Java. Prior to 1959, Ajoeb had been a member of the Youth Review Board of the Department of Education and Culture, a member of the Radio Broadcast Advisory Board of the Department of Information of Indonesia, and a member of the Film Board of the Department of Information. To date I have been unable to find information about the exact periods of Joebaar Ajoeb's involvement with these institutions. Following the coup in 1965, Ajoeb was arrested and imprisoned without trial.

8 'LEKRA didirikan ditahun 1950 dari kesadaran tentang hakekat Revolusi Agustus 1945 dan tentang hubungannja antara Revolusi itu dengan kebudajaan. Bahwa Revolusi itu besar sekali artinja bagi kebudajaan, dan bahwa sekaligus, sebaliknja, kebudajaan besar sekali artinja bagi Revolusi Agustus' (*Harian Rakjat*, 31-1-1959).

9 Sabar Anantaguna (b. 1929), one of the members of LEKRA's Central Secretariat (following the National Congress of 24-29 January 1959), explained the open character of LEKRA as an organization (interview 4-9-2009). Anantaguna, a former classmate of Njoto in their hometown of Jember, East Java, was arrested after the 1965 coup and imprisoned on Buru Island from 1970-1978.

> Indonesian people's culture. However, in drawing on that essence we will not slavishly copy anything.[10]

LEKRA placed the people as the root of creativity, as was mirrored in its conception of People's culture in 1950. According to LEKRA's Mukadimah, 'The struggle of a People's Culture is an inseparable part of the struggle of the People in general.'[11]

Organizationally, LEKRA was divided into seven creative institutes;[12] four of them were formed after the 1959 LEKRA Congress in Solo: The Lembaga Sastera Indonesia (Indonesian Literary Institute), the Lembaga Senirupa Indonesia (Indonesian Fine Arts Institute), the Lembaga Film Indonesia (Indonesian Film Institute), and the Lembaga Senidrama Indonesia (Indonesian Dramatic Art Institute). The other three creative institutes, namely the Lembaga Musik Indonesia (LMI, Indonesian Music Institute), the Lembaga Senitari Indonesia (Indonesian Dance Art Institute), and the Lembaga Ilmu Indonesia (Indonesian Institute of Science) were all formed following LEKRA's plenary meeting of August 1960.[13]

The focus of LMI's attention included local Indonesian music as well as Western music (diatonic), and traditional music as well as new compositions, especially those with what was considered a revolutionary focus. The cultural tasks that LEKRA took on within the field of music were set out in the findings of LEKRA's 1959 National Congress in Solo. They were to:

> 1. Organize the registration of People's music [-dance] in all regions.
> 2. Spread and intensify music education [and dance] through:

10 Foulcher 1986:217. Sikap kebudayaan Rakyat terhadap Kebudayaan asing atau luar Negeri sama sekali tidak bersikap permusuhan. Kebudayaan Asing yang progressif akan diambil sarinya sebanyak-banyaknya untuk kemajuan perkembangan gerakan kebudayaan rakyat Indonesia. Tetapi dalam hal mengambil sari ini, kita tidak akan menjiplak secara membudak (Foulcher 1986:212) (The capital letters follow the original text, but Foulcher reproduced with modernized Indonesian spelling).

11 'Perjuangan Kebudayaan Rakyat adalah bagian yang tidak dapat dipisahkan dari perjuangan Rakyat umum' (Foulcher 1986:211).

12 In Rhoma D.A. Yuliantri and Muhidin M. Dahlan (2008:35-38), LEKRA is described as having only 6 creative institutes, without mentioning the Indonesian Science Institute. To date, I have not found further information concerning The Indonesian Science Institute.

13 It is not known with certainty when the LMI was formed as a separate entity from the Dance Art Institute. In LEKRA's 1st Congress in Solo in 1959, these two institutes were mentioned jointly as 'The Indonesian Institute of Music and Dance' (Lembaga Musik Indonesia dan Lembaga Tari Indonesia). See *Laporan Kebudajaan Rakjat II* (People's Culture Report II), published by LEKRA's publishing section, p. 165. LMI Djogja was founded later, on 15 April 1963. See 'Laporan Kusni Sulang melawan musik ngak-ngik-ngok mengembangkan musik jang kerakjatan', *Harian Rakjat*, 2-1-1964.

a. Publications and broadcasts;
b. Seminars and discussion circles;
c. Competitions and performances.
3. Encourage the prevention and elimination of indecency and other symptoms of decadence in music [and dance].
4. Fight for the intensification of music [and dance] lessons in schools, especially in teacher-training schools.
5. Organize music [and dance] exchanges both between regions and internationally.
6. Encourage selectivity and creative work in the field of music [and dance].
7. Call to attention the rediscovery, development, and improvement of People's music [and dance] along with their instruments.[14]

At first, LMI intended to set up registration and development programs for regional musics. Five years later, in 1964, in step with the changes in Soekarno's political stance given the increasing influence of the Left at a national level, the musical agenda changed as well. LMI's activities were increasingly tied to political activities. This also served to confirm LEKRA's stand in the field of culture, that is, 'politics as the commander'.

LMI's first National Conference took place from 31 September-5 October 1964 in Jakarta. According to the report in *Harian Rakjat*, the aim of the conference was to oppose music regarded as 'crazy' (*kegila-gilaan*), and to carry out Bung Karno's line in the field of music.[15] This national conference took place as the cultural situation was at the boiling point of change, or, as President Soekarno put it, '*Tahun vivere pericoloso*' (abbreviated as the acronym Tavip) or 'The year of living dangerously'. As the conference proceeded, Sudharnoto, the Chair of LMI, discussed in his report the issue of Indonesian music in the midst of the heating political situation. In his view, music functioned to cultivate national culture and oppose

14 1. Menjelenggarakan registrasi music [-tari] Rakjat diseluruh daerah. 2. Meluaskan dan mengintensifkan pendidikan musik [dan tari] dengan djalan: a. Penerbitan dan penjiaran; b. Seminar-seminar dan lingkaran-lingkaran diskusi; c. Perlombaan dan pertundjukan. 3. Menggiatkan pentjegahan dan pemberantasan pentjabulan serta gedjala-gedjala dekaden lainnja dalam musik [dan tari]. 4. Memperdjuangkan pengintensifan peladjaran musik [dan tari] disekolah-sekolah, terutama disekolah-sekolah guru. 5. Menjelenggarakan tukar-menukar musik [dan tari], baik antardaerah maupun antarnegara. 6. Menggiatkan kerdja seleksi dan kreasi dilapangan musik [dan tari]. 7. Mengingatkan kerdja penggalian, pengembangan dan peningkatan musik [dan tari] Rakjat serta alat-alatnja. See 'Resolusi atas laporan musik dan laporan tari' dalam Kongres Nasional ke-I LEKRA', *Harian Rakjat*, 14-2-1959.

15 'Konferensi I Lembaga Musik Indonesia untuk melaksanakan garis Bung Karno dibidang musik', *Harian Rakjat*, 25-10-1964.

a US culture regarded as imperialistic. Using the prevalent slogans of the time, Sudharnoto outlined his view:

> […] with the rhythm of Djarek [Djalannja Revolusi Kita or The Path of Our Revolution], Resopim [Revolusi, Sosialisme, dan Pimipinan or Revolution, Socialism, and Leadership], with the Takem [Tahun Kemenangan or Year of Victory] and Gesuri [Genta Suara Revolusi Indonesia or The Pealing Bell of the Indonesian Revolution] melody, with the harmony of Manipol [Manifesto Politik] strengthened by the glorious arrangement of Tavip, progressive music artists will smash American imperialist culture, smash Manikebu [Manifes Kebudayaan or Cultural Manifesto] and cultivate a music with national identity.[16]

RAISING THE PROFILE OF REGIONAL MUSIC

Discussions about people's music were prominent in the early 1960s (Wienkatoe 1960). In this case, 'people's music' referred to regional music within the framework of the search for national identity thought to have its 'own identity', and in conformity with Soekarno's slogans about promoting 'national identity' ('*kepribadian nasional*'). LMI's first national conference in 1964 ceremoniously announced its idea to research and compile data on regional music and songs down to the most isolated islands.[17] LEKRA strove to make regional music not merely marginal or tokenistic, but to be pushed into the centre of things while raising its standards as high as possible.

From the early 1950s, attention to 'national music' became one element in the search for a national culture thought to mirror Indonesian identity. LEKRA was highly involved in this effort, both as an institution and at the level of its individual members, working together with the government. One example of government activity in regional music involving members of LEKRA was the survey of people's entertainment, including music. In 1954, for example, five years before LMI was established, the composer Amir

16 [d]engan irama Djarek, Resopim, dengan melodi Takem dan Gesuri, dengan harmoni Manipol yang diperkuat gubahan megah Tavip, seniman musik progresif mengganjang kebudajaan imperialisme Amerika Serikat, mengganjang Manikebu, dan membina musik jang berkepribadian nasional. 'Laporan Umum Sudharnoto "Betapa besar bahaja musik dekaden"', *Harian Rakjat*, 2-11-1964.

17 See 'Pokok-pokok laporan Ketua Umum Konfernas LMI', *Harian Rakjat*, 15-11-1964.

Pasaribu[18] and the writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer,[19] together with LEKRA members like poet and writer Rivai Apin,[20] cultural figure Joebaar Ajoeb, and painter Basuki Resobowo,[21] received a mandate from the Jakarta municipal government to undertake observations of people's entertainment including *gambus*, *keroncong*, *dagelan*, *topeng*, *reog*, *bobodoran*, and *lenong* in Kampung Bojong, Lenteng Agung, a hamlet of the Pasar Minggu area in Jakarta.[22]

To what extent was the goal of the observations of regional arts undertaken by LMI similar to that of the government? In-depth research would be required to answer that question, but Wienaktoe's writing can give us some idea. Wienaktoe was an official in the Departemen Pendidikan, Pengadjaran dan Kebudajaan (DPPK, Department of Education, Teaching, and Culture) in 1960. He explains that one aim of the revitalization of people's music was to research the origins of music, the original conditions under which the music was sung, the mood that it created, and the rhythms sung by the people, and not just to note down the melody of regional music and then add interesting words or music.[23] However, the revi-

18 Amir Pasaribu (1915-2010) was born in Siborong-borong, North Sumatra, and died in Medan. He was trained as a classical musician. He also founded the Composer's League and The Indonesian Music Association (1950) (Eritha Rohana Sitorus 2009:13-72). Regarding the extent of his relations with LEKRA, I have not yet been able to locate comprehensive data. During the years after the coup when anyone suspected to have leftist connections was being hunted, Pasaribu moved to Suriname where he taught music from 1968, returning to Indonesia in 1995. See also http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_Pasaribu (accessed 10-1-2011).

19 Concerning Pramoedya Ananta Toer's membership in LEKRA, this is still controversial. There are some who maintain that Pramoedya Ananta Toer was not a member of LEKRA. However, a source that I obtained records Pramoedya's name as a member of LEKRA's Central leadership following the LEKRA National Congress of 24-29 January 1959 in Solo, Central Java. He is also recorded as occupying the position of Director of one of LEKRA's creative institutes, the Indonesian Literary Institute (LESTRA). See 'Lekra Pusat Bentuk Lembaga2', *Harian Rakjat*, 5-4-1959.

20 The writer Rivai Apin (1927-1995) was, together with A.S. Dharta, editor of the LEKRA journal *Madjalah Djaman Baru* when it began in 1950. He was later, at various times, on the editorial staff of *Gema Suasana, Siasat* and *Zenith*. From 1959-1965 he was on the Central Committee of LEKRA. He was arrested and imprisoned after the 1965 coup and released in 1979. According to Permadi Liosta (painter and member of LEKRA in Bali who was imprisoned on Buru Island), Rivai Apin was also held on Buru.

21 The painter and set designer Basuki Resobowo (1917-1999) was a founder of the 'People's Painters' group (Pelukis Rakjat) in 1947, and one of the founders of the National Film Company (Perusahan Film Nasional, Perfini) together with Usmar Ismail. He was a member of LEKRA's Central Secretariat. After 1965, he lived in exile abroad and died in Amsterdam. See further David Hill 1993.

22 See further 'Jika Amir mengritik Hollywood', http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com (9-2-2009), (accessed on 1-11-2009). My thanks to Els Bogaerts who informed me about this source. The extent to which LEKRA was a partner of the government in cultural activities in those years still requires investigation.

23 Wienaktoe 1960:19. By 'people's music', Wienaktoe means regional music.

talization that LMI undertook constituted an effort to find revolutionary forms and music.[24]

Regional music, LEKRA's Secretary Joebaar Ajoeb said in 1964, 'must be developed creatively as the basis for national music. We must develop regional music into a revolutionary music […]'.[25] In other words, hastening the development of national music required a process of acculturation with society, its structure, and the social ideals of its leaders and quality of its authorities, together with the simplification and improvement of regional music. According to Joebaar Ajoeb, national music would be of no value if it did not include the variety of regional music.

LEKRA also aimed for regional music to achieve the highest prestige within the arena of Indonesian music. This drove LEKRA's efforts to develop regional music into a 'revolutionary' form. Regional music, as a creative product, was to be given revolutionary themes. Its image would then be raised through the organization of regional, national, and revolutionary music festivals and choral competitions.

DEVELOPING REGIONAL MUSIC

One method undertaken by LMI members to develop regional music with a revolutionary character was to change the lyrics or words, that is, to create words that fitted with the reality of the times, without altering the melody. Songs could be popularized (disseminated widely) through their melodies. Yet here Wienaktoe worried that if this was not done carefully, popularized regional music could be trapped as merely entertaining songs that emphasized only their power of attraction, while their actual regional thematic content (substance) would be hidden (Wienaktoe 1960:19).

F.L. Risakotta (1933-?), a poet from Medan and member of LEKRA, discussed the problem of creating songs with melodies from regional music in a lecture he gave to artists of the Satu Nusa Ensemble during a survey visit to West Sumatra in 1964. He took this opportunity to emphasize the need to create new Minang songs such as *Kana djo kampuang*. Risakotta saw that it was necessary to create rhythms from *saluang* (bamboo flute) songs, rhythms that were unique to that region. Local artists, by integrating their work

24 According to Busjari Latif, a member of LEKRA, revolutionary music comprises songs that stoke the fires of the People's opposition to oppression. It gives rise to the desire to resist, to wipe away the sorrows of the struggle and give birth to the smile of death. See Busjari Latif 1964.

25 '[h]arus dikembangkan setjara kreatif sebagai basis untuk musik nasional. Musik daerah harus dikembangkan mendjadi musik revolusioner [...]'. See 'Joebaar Ajoeb pada Konfernas I Lembaga Musik; Kembangkan musik daerah untuk basis musik nasional', *Harian Rakjat*, 4-11-1964.

with those unique rhythms, could create songs that would be sung for years to come. On the other hand, songs that were mixed with calypso rhythms 'made in USA', he said, would quickly be forgotten.[26] The story of the composer and musician Michael Karatem (b. 1929) also illustrates the rising awareness of regional music during that era. In 1964 he arranged a song based upon a poem by Putu Oka Sukanta entitled *Dikaki-kaki Tangkuban Perahu* (In the Tangkuban Perahu foothills) using characteristically Sundanese rhythms.[27]

Renowned composers were also influenced by the current of 'regional music' of the times. Amir Pasaribu, for example, attempted to elevate a Sumatran regional song in a form that was simple and easily remembered, with the title *Slamat, slamat* (Long live!). This song was sung in two languages – Indonesian and Batak – with the same meaning. '*Slamat*' in Indonesian has the same meaning as '*Horas*' in Batak. The first refrain of the lyrics uses the word '*slamat*' and the second refrain uses '*Horas*'.[28]

THE MUSICAL LINE DIVIDING FRIEND FROM FOE

In the early years following the founding of LMI, its attention was primarily devoted to the search for a 'revolutionary' national music. In 1959, Soekarno called on all artists to stand in the ranks of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist front. In the field of culture, Soekarno campaigned to develop a culture with a national character that rejected imperialist culture. As LEKRA's creative institute in the field of music, LMI followed the Soekarno government's position.[29] At that time, both the government and LEKRA

26 'Gunakan irama saluang untuk lagu2 Minang', *Harian Rakjat*, 20-9-1964.

27 Putu Oka Sukanta (b. 1939) is a writer originally from Bali who was formerly a member of LEKRA. He was arrested after the coup in October 1965 and held without trial until 1976. During my research for this essay, I came across Karatem's arrangement of the score for the song *Dikaki-kaki Tangkuban Perahu*. In 1967, this song became a required number for baritones competing in the annual Radio Star competition, at a time when Karatem and Putu Oka were both in prison. *Dikaki-kaki tangkuban Perahu* also constitutes a reflection of the cooperation between a poet and a musician. Thanks to Karatem, Titik, and Putu Oka for information on this song.

28 'Slamat, slamat', *Harian Rakjat*, 20-10-1961.

29 On anti-neo-colonialism/imperialism, see Soekarno's speech of 1963 titled 'Ganjang mereka-mereka jang anti-Nasakom' ('Smash all those who are anti-Nasakom'), the text of which was published in *Harian Rakjat*, 18-2-1963. Here it is important to note that four years prior to this, President Soekarno called on four ministers to guarantee the security of national culture. These four, the Vice-Ministers of Information, PPDK, Trade, and Minister Ex-Official [*sic*] of the Police, were to ensure national culture was in harmony with Manipol as well as protecting it from the eroding effect of foreign culture. See 'Presiden panggil 4 menteri untuk mendjamin kebudajaan nasional', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-8-1959.

(including LMI within LEKRA) regarded pop culture, especially American pop culture, as imperialist and 'decadent' culture. The most obvious example was in the area of film; but the same was true of music.[30] Although popular western songs were still played, in 1963 exception was taken to several kinds of songs that were considered 'whiny' (*cengeng*), like rock 'n' roll.

The statement of Sudharnoto (Chair of LMI) at the LMI Conference in 1964 provides a picture of LMI's stance on Indonesia's musical stage in the midst of a heating political atmosphere. From his statement we can map those considered to be cultural 'foes'.

> We must be more vigilant, more tenacious, and more persevering in opposing imperialist culture, especially US imperialist culture, which in reality continues to threaten us in every shape and way. Crazy songs and whiny songs have appeared these days as a result of the vicious attacks of American imperialist culture in the form of reproducing the 'dive-rhythm-music' ala Elvys Presley and 'sex dream' songs ala Tommy Sands. They spread this decadent musical bait in step with their attacks on our People in politics, the economy, and in step as well with their press that immorally desires to tarnish the good name/character of our Great Leader of the Revolution, Bung Karno […][31]

It is clear that anything with a whiff of 'imperialism' or pop à la Elvis Presley was placed in the category of cultural foe. Sudharnoto saw this policy as good practice in line with the teaching of Bung Karno in 'Manipol'-izing Indonesian music. On 14 December 1963 at the Presidential Palace in Bogor, President Soekarno called on artists to present songs in harmony with the 'national character' and suggested that they no longer sing songs

30 See 'Aksi boikot film AS didukung oleh importir film nasional dan OPS Bioskop', *Harian Rakjat*, 10-5-1964. Further on the film boycotts, see Krishna Sen 1985.

31 Kita harus lebih waspada, lebih ulet, dan lebih gigih melawan kebudajaan imperialis, terutama imperialis AS, jang dalam kenjataan masih terus-menerus mengantjam kita, dengan segala bentuk dan tjaranja. Timbulah lagu2 jang kegila-gilaan dan lagu2 tjengeng dewasa ini adalah akibat serangan djahat kebudajaan imperialis AS dalam bentuk mendjalankan lagu2 'dive-rythm-music' ala Elvys Presley dan lagu2, 'sex dream' ala Tommy Sands. Umpanan2 musik dekaden mereka sebarkan sedjalan dengan serangan2 terhadap Rakjat kita di bidang politik, ekonomi, sedjadjar djuga dengan pers mereka setjara imoral hendak mendjatuhkan nama/baik pribadi Pimpinan Besar Revolusi kita Bung Karno [...]. 'Ganjang kebudajaan imperialis AS & Manikebu; Bina musik jang berkepribadian nasional, Pokok-pokok laporan umum ketika lembaga musik Lembaga Musik Indonesia To kepada Konfernas Musik Indonesia', *Harian Rakjat*, 15-11-1964.

that weakened the revolution: 'so that the *romantic* and dynamic of our Revolution truly resound, and don't sing those *ngak ngik ngok* (rock 'n' roll) songs any more, or Manikebu songs, or sappy songs.'[32]

In reaction to what it saw as the increasing dissemination of imperialist songs, the Central Secretariat (Pimpinan Pusat) of LEKRA joined the call for cultural, political, and administrative steps to prevent the spread of '*ngak-ngik-ngok*' music, rock 'n' roll (including Indonesian rock 'n' roll like the group Koes Plus), the twist and the Beatles, along with Indian songs regarded as whiny romanticism.[33] LEKRA's central leadership joined in the campaign against the sale, reproduction of recordings, as well as the imitation of types of music considered decadent.[34]

If LMI regarded pop music (or Indonesian music that imitated foreign pop) as the 'foe', it regarded music with a national character and that firmly maintained a progressive and revolutionary outlook as its 'friend'. Even *keroncong* music, popular as the music of the independence struggle and well known for its romantic and sentimental style, could be given a progressive and revolutionary identity once its lyrics had been 'revitalized', as was the case with *Kroncong Kemajoran*, which retained the traditional riddle-like form of verse known as pantun:

Telor pindang mahal harganja	Chillied eggs are expensive
Pelopor pedjuang rakjat pekerdja	The workers pioneer the struggle
Buah nanas mahal di bajar	Pineapple costs dearly
Meskipun ganas (imperialis dan feudal)	Although ferocious (imperialists and feudalists)
Kita tak gentar	We won't tremble
Beli ontjom dipasar minggu	Buy soy cakes at Sunday market
Dengan NASAKOM bersatu.	With NASAKOM we unite.[35]

But the case of *keroncong* was an exception. In general, the music supported as revolutionary consisted of new creations with realistic lyrics emphasizing socio-political conditions and responding to Soekarno's slogans in the form of song.

32 '[s]upaja romantic dan dinamik Revolusi kita benar2 berdentam dan tak lagi menjanjikan lagu2 jang ngak ngik ngok, lagu2 Manikebu, lagu2 jang klemek2'. 'Ganjang kebudajaan imperialis AS & Manikebu, Bina musik jang berkepribadian nasional […]', *Harian Rakjat*, 15-11-1964.

33 For more on the anti-Beatles and Koes Plus campaign see Steven Farram 2007.

34 'Ambil tindakan hukum terhadap penjebar musik kontra-revolusioner', *Harian Rakjat*, 11-7-1965.

35 'Kroncong massal Tavip', *Harian Rakjat*, 20-12-64.

SONGS AS STATEMENTS OF DIPLOMACY AND SOLIDARITY

In addition to becoming a political language used to combat one's opponents who were assumed to endanger the national character, leftist music in Indonesia also became a language of solidarity and diplomacy during the 1950s and 1960s. Many songs were created with themes recalling solidarity or took shape as an active response to events that occurred in friendly nations.

The creation of songs with ideological themes constituted one cultural activity strongly supported by socialist countries and the socialist movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Socialism was an international movement. It is not surprising then, that Indonesia also created songs that wove together solidarity and stressed bonds between socialist countries (or within the socialist movement).

Not only did songs serve as weapons to strike out at enemies of the Revolution, but they were also at the forefront of diplomacy between countries undergoing similar trials and tribulations. One example is a song from 1946 recalling an event that occurred a year after Soekarno and Hatta had proclaimed Indonesian Independence. This was Indonesia's decision to send rice to India as a fellow country struggling for its independence. The lyrics for the song, entitled *Padi untuk India* (Rice for India) retold the statement of solidarity when Indonesia's export of 15,000 bales of rice to India was nearly prevented by the Dutch naval blockade. A. Alie turned this event into a song with the following lyrics:[36]

Padi untuk India, djandji dari pemerintah Indonesia	Rice for India, promised by Indonesia's government
Padi untuk India, kita rakjat masih terus berusaha	Rice for India, our people are still striving
Padi untuk India, ajo kerahkan tenaga kita	Rice for India, let's all summon our energy
Memenuhi djandji Negara	Fulfilling our country's promise
Padi untuk saudara India	Rice for brother India
Padi untuk India, dengan dasar kemanusiaan kita	Rice for India, based on our humanity
Padi untuk India, tolong-menolong hakikat manusia	Rice for India, mutual aid is fundamentally human
Padi untuk India, berkat usaha rakjat semua	Rice for India, thanks to the work of all the people

36 A score in the private documentation of Mudji Astuti Martoyo (a member of Gembira) bore the title *Padi untuk India* with A. Alie noted as the creator. I have been unable to trace the identity of A. Alie and the year the song was composed.

Sekarang telah tersedia padi untuk saudara India.	Now we've sent rice for brother India.[37]

Music also functioned as a language of solidarity when the Congo's Patrice Lumumba was killed on 17 January 1961. Njoto, one of the founders of LEKRA and at this time a member of its Central Secretariat, later responded to that event in a poem entitled *Merah kesumba* (Scarlet red).[38] The composer Amir Pasaribu then adapted the poem as a song. These are the lyrics of Njoto's *Merah kesumba*:

Darah Lumumba merah kesumba Darah Lumumba merah kesumba Konggo!	Lumumba's blood is scarlet red Lumumba's blood is scarlet red Congo!
Laparmu lapar kami Laparmu lapar kita Lapar revolusi Darah Lumumba merah kesumba Darah Lumumba merah kesumba Konggo!	Your hunger is our hunger Your hunger is our shared hunger The hunger of revolution Lumumba's blood is scarlet red Lumumba's blood is scarlet red Congo!
Revolusimu revolusi kami Revolusimu revolusi kita Revolusi dunia. (Njoto 1961.)	Your revolution is our revolution Your revolution is our shared revolution The global revolution.[39]

Music could also be a song of friendship, as was common with state visits, such as foreign heads of state to Indonesia, or of Indonesia abroad. For example, a song was composed to represent the friendship of Soekarno and the leader of North Korea, Kim Il Sung. Entitled *Soekarno-Kim Il Sung*, with lyrics by S.W. Kuntjahjo and arranged by M. Karatem, the song was created for the visit by Kim Il Sung to the Istana Negara (Presidential Palace) as a guest of state on 10 April, 1965.[40]

37 The lyrics are taken from a recording of the song in the personal documentation of Mudji Astuti Martoyo. This was the product of a recording made by KITLV in collaboration with Suara Pelangi, 2009. Arrangement and lyrics for *Padi untuk India* by A. Alie, are according to the score found in the private documentation of a member of Gembira.

38 LEKRA, which was sympathetic to the struggle of Lumumba against the imperialists, published a collection of poetry *We all are Lumumba* that was referred to the Emergency Meeting of the Asia-Africa Writers in Tokyo (1961) and the Meeting of the Board of Solidarity in Bandung (1961). See *Laporan kebudajaan* (n.d.:120), published by the LEKRA Publications section.

39 Joebaar Ajoeb gives this song as an example of music with a revolutionary spirit along with the song *Afrika bersatu* (Africa unite) by Sudharnoto and *Nasakom* by Soebronto K. Admodjo. See Joebaar Ajoeb n.d.:83.

40 See 'Soekarno-Kim Il Sung', *Harian Rakjat*, 10-4-1965.

Songs of friendship were also composed for cultural visits, for instance the visit of (North) Korean artists to Indonesia who performed at the Serikat Buruh Kereta Api (SBKA, Railway Workers Union) building in 1963. According to the rapturous report in *Harian Rakjat*, the building was packed full with the crowd overflowing into the street and the applause was thunderous. Shortly thereafter, the Music and Dance Ensemble Pyongyang sang the songs *Kim Il Sung Jang Goon Eunorai*, *Halo-halo Bandung*, *Awas Inggris dan Amerika* (Beware England and America) and *Nasakom Bersatu* (Nasakom Unite). Sumardjo of the Indonesia-Korea Friendship Institute opened the program by stating that the event was intended to give form to anti-imperialist solidarity. 'Kim Il Sung and the presence of the delegation of Korean artists demonstrate the intimacy of the friendship between RI-RRDK (The Republic of Indonesia and The People's Democratic Republic of Korea), and inspire opposition to U.S.-led imperialism', Sumardjo said.[41] The visit of the Korean artists along with the coverage of the performance in the (leftist) newspaper in Indonesia indicates the extent to which socialist ideological songs from Indonesia had entered the international socialist repertoire in those times.

Both LEKRA and the government undertook visits and cultural missions of this kind. One resolution of LEKRA's first congress in Solo in 1959 was to organize visits of Indonesian arts delegations to fraternal countries.[42] For example, in 1963 LEKRA united representatives of several groups, among them the Gembira Ensemble (Jakarta),[43] to form a cultural delegation to Vietnam, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and North Korea. As a cultural delegation, this visit also gave its participants the opportunity to increase their perception and knowledge in the field of culture, including music. The leader of the mission on this occasion was Drs. Sunardi from Yogyakarta, a dancer and instructor at Gadjah Mada University.[44] Among those joining the delegation were well-known singer Effie

41 'Seniman-seniman Korea membawa lagu2 Indonesia', *Harian Rakjat*, 18-4-1963:3.

42 For comparison, see Jennifer Lindsay's essay in this volume concerning state cultural missions abroad. The artists who went on such missions were also impressed with art schools in the PRC.

43 Participants from the Gembira Ensemble were Yulmi, Sulistyaningtyas, Ani Munadi, Kondar Sibarani, and Supardjo (a member of the Pemuda Rakjat or People's Youth). See Koesalah Soebagyo Toer (1998:114) Lampiran 5 'Muhammad Sutiyoso'.

44 Sunardi was a graduate in education (pedagogy) and a classical Javanese dancer. He was the first head (Sekretaris) of LEKRA in Yogyakarta, from 1951. After the 1965 coup he was arrested and held in Wirogunan prison (Yogyakarta) and died. I have not yet found accurate data regarding the years of his incarceration, the time and cause of his death. For further information on the names of participants in this delegation, see BSD 1964.

Tjoa (classical music vocalist),[45] Andi Mulia (a classical music vocalist from Makassar), Achmad (violin player), and Muchtar Embut (pianist) who was famous as a composer of songs.[46] In 2009 I had the opportunity to meet with Michael Karatem, a member of one of the groups that joined the LEKRA delegation in 1963. According to him, the visit to the Hanoi City Hall made a great impression. After the performance had concluded, he recalled, there were no more official ceremonies because the Mayor of Hanoi remarked that 'Soekarno's children are the very nephews and nieces of Uncle Ho himself'. The Mayor then offered his greetings and kissed the delegates while entrusting them with his greetings for President Soekarno.[47] Karatem also found a visit to a music school in the PRC interesting. He was surprised that China, renowned as a communist country, had a great appreciation of Western classical music. He was even more surprised that Chinese musicians were able to play Indonesian songs most skilfully. He acknowledged that one thing he learned from China was their way of creating music. He explained that he still practices the Chinese method of creating music, for example, in his technique of creating music together with others, especially in dividing tasks between a composer, writer, and linguist.

THE CREATION OF MANIPOL AND TAVIP SONGS

The songs LEKRA supported had to demonstrate themes that were close to reality and to human problems. Music had to contribute to management of the nation, politics, the party, Asian-African solidarity, peasants, and it should not betray the people. These songs generally used a 'march' rhythm, were patriotic and spirited, and encouraged people to manifest the ideals portrayed in the lyrics. The extent of political nuance in the music that LEKRA supported can be seen, for example, in the following lyrics:

45 Effie Tjoa was a famous soprano who was also known as a composer of classical songs (*seriosa*). She was a member of several state cultural missions abroad (see Jennifer Lindsay in this volume).

46 Muchtar (also spelt Mochtar) Embut was born in Ujung Pandang (Makassar), Sulawesi Selatan in 1934 and died in Bandung in 1973. At five years of age, he could already play piano, and four years later composed a children's song entitled *Kupu-kupu* (Butterflies). At 16 he finished his first composition for piano. He composed more than 100 songs. Several of them are: *Di wajahmu kulihat bulan* (I see the moon in your face), *Di sudut bibirmu* (Close to your lips) and *Tiada bulan di wajah rawan* (There is no moonlight in a troubled face).

47 This story apparently made quite an impression among members of the delegation, as was evident when I read 'Djakarta, Peking, Hanoi, Pyongyang bersekolah dalam missi kesenian Lekra', *Harian Rakjat*, 16-8-1964. Another member of the delegation told a similar story.

1.
Kau tjabut segala dariku tjemar dan noda gelap dan…
Kau beri segala padaku kasih dan bintang-bintang surga
Partaiku, Partaiku segenap hatiku bagimu
Partaiku, kuwarisi api djuangmu
PKI, PKI segenap hatiku bagimu PKI,
PKI, PKI kuteruskan djedjak djuangmu PKI…

You cleansed me of all filth and disgrace…
You gave me everything love and the heavens above
My Party, My Party my whole heart is yours
My Party, I've inherited your fighting flame
PKI my whole heart is yours
PKI I'm following your path of struggle…

(*Pudjaan kepada Partai* [Worship for the Party], lyrics by S.W. Kuntjahjo)[48]

2.

Bulat semangat tekad kita	Our spirit and determination are ripe
Barisan sukarelawan Indonesia	Ranks of the Indonesian volunteers
Bedil dan sangkur siap bertempur	Our rifles and bayonets are ready to fight
Siap tantang kita lawan pantang mundur	Ready to challenge, we oppose, no retreat
Hai, hajolah Kawan!	Hey, come on friend!
Buruh, tani, pemuda dan angkatan kita	Workers, peasants, youth and our peers
Madju berlawan siap sendjata dan tjukupkan sandang pangan	Advance resist weapons at the ready with food and clothing
pastilah menang, pastilah menang!	we're sure to win, sure to win!
Pasti menang Revolusi Empat Lima hajolah	The '45 Revolution is sure to win, come on
Awas imperialisme durhaka	Look out evil imperialism
Pasukan Rakjat kita	Our People's troops
Kuat perkasa	Are strong and brave
Ini dadaku	Here I am
Mana dadau	I dare you to fight
Kamu menjerang kita ganjang	You attack and we will
djadilah…serbu!	smash…attack!
Hajolah kawan! Buruh tani…	Come on friends! Workers peas ants…

(*Madju sukarelawan* [Advance volunteers], lyrics by Sudharnoto)[49]

48 *Harian Rakjat*, 17-5-1963.
49 *Harian Rakjat*, 22-3-1964.

3.

Satu hati satu pikiran	One heart one mind
Rakjat Asia dan Afrika	The peoples of Asia and Africa
Kita lawan kita kikis penindas dan pendjadjahan	We resist we erode oppressors and colonization
Kita bangkitkan semangat berlawan untuk kemerdekaan	We arouse the spirit to resist for freedom
Hidup abadi	May it live forever
Setia kawan Asia dan Africa.	Solidarity between Asia and Africa.

(*Solidaritas Asia Afrika*, Kondar Sibarani)[50]

The artists involved with the creation of 'progressive music' in the 1950s and early 1960s came from a variety of organizations, regions, educational backgrounds, fields of work, and musical experience. Not all of them were LEKRA members.[51] Sudharnoto (1925-2000) for instance, was an experienced composer. Initially, he studied medicine at the University of Indonesia. Given his musical talent, he switched to a musical career. He is noted as the Vice-General Secretary II (Wakil Sekretaris Umum II), was made manager of LEKRA's Central Secretariat at the first plenary meeting in Solo, Central Java, on 28 January 1959, and was the Chair of LMI (1964). He also worked at Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI, Indonesian National Radio).[52]

Another example is Soebronto K. Atmodjo (1929-1982), born in Pati, Central Java. He honed his musical talent after joining the Gembira Ensemble in February 1952.[53] According to Titik Kamariah: 'Every time Bung Karno conveyed a statement to society, he (Soebronto) created a song', like *Nasakom bersatu* (Nasakom unite), *Resopim* and others. Soebronto worked (1951-1954) as an official in the Department of Education, Training and Culture. He also wrote for the mass media and became the editor of *Pemuda* (Youth) magazine.[54] Indeed, in the beginning he had no formal educational training in music. Nevertheless, in August 1965 he finished his stud-

50 *Harian Rakjat*, 11-4-1964.

51 Mudji Astuti kindly provided the data on the composers Sudharnoto, Soebronto Atmodjo and Kondar Sibarani.

52 After the coup in 1965, Sudharnoto was briefly arrested, but not imprisoned.

53 Thanks to Titik Kamariah (after marrying Soebronto K. Atmodjo she was better known as Titik Soebronto) who provided this information.

54 From 1954 to 1960 Soebronto worked as chief of the secretariat, and translator for the Czechoslovakian embassy in Jakarta. He also assisted with the arts broadcasts of RRI and was in charge of the monthly radio broadcasts of the Gembira Chorus (1954-1961). From 1961-1966 he worked as cultural administrator (rank E/II) in the Inspectorate of Culture for the Jakarta Region under the division of the DPPK.

ies and graduated 'cum laude' at the Hanns Eisler Advanced Music School, Department of Choral Music and Art Ensembles, in (East) Berlin, the German Democratic Republic. He undertook studies there as an assignment from the Department DPPK. He was also the head of the arts section in the Youth/Students delegation at the 1957 World Festival of Democratic Youth and Students in Moscow.[55]

Kondar Sibarani (1935-2010), creator of the song *Solidaritas Asia Afrika*, came from Tapanuli, North Sumatra. In Medan he became leader of the Madju Tak Gentar (Fearless Advance) Ensemble. After moving to Jakarta, he also became leader of the Gembira Ensemble.[56]

Gembira Ensemble performing at the Gedung Kesenian, Jakarta (date unknown). Kondar Sibarani, conductor.
Female singers, from left to right: Widati, unknown, Yuni, unknown, Sutriningtyas, Sulistyowati, unknown, unknown, Wien, unknown, Meta, Nanik, unknown, unknown.
Male singers from left to right: Supardjo, unknown, unknown, unknown, Susetyo Toer (Koesalah Toer's younger brother), Rusdianto, Teguh, Bhadri, Sri Malik.
(collection of Yuni. Informants, Mudji Astuti dan Amiyati)

55 Thanks to Titik Kamariah who provided this information in a personal interview, 17-3-2010. Soebronto was arrested briefly in October 1965, then rearrested in 1968 and held without trial, including seven years on Buru Island, until 1977.

56 In 1964 Sibarani went to Beijing, and after the 1965 coup was unable to return to Indonesia. He lived in exile, living finally in Germany where he died in 2010.

Michael Karatem was born in Ambon in 1929. From a young age he was familiar with Western music, which he studied in school. He joined LEKRA in 1963, and as mentioned above, was a member of the LEKRA arts delegation to Vietnam, the PRC, and North Korea, which acquainted him with the Gembira Ensemble. He worked as a teacher in a People's School in Jakarta.[57]

S.W. Kuntjahjo (1928-?), the writer of the lyrics for *Pudjaan kepada Partai* (Worship for the Party), was a poet originally from Madura.[58] He was active in The All-Indonesia Central Workers Union (SOBSI). The song *Pudjaan kepada Partai* was given musical arrangement by Subakat.[59]

ENSEMBLES GENERATE A NATIONAL MUSIC

LEKRA's support for generating a 'revolutionary national music' was directed not only at creating music, but also, as explained above, towards music as an activity, especially as an activity of youth and students. The period from the late 1950s to the early 1960s was a fertile one for song ensembles, or music and dance ensembles, which performed a repertoire of new 'progressive' or 'revolutionary' creations, along with national songs and regional songs with new arrangements (in the style of Western diatonic music). Choral singing constituted an enormously popular activity in socialist countries during this era. It aimed to build solidarity among youth, and was supported by world youth festivals and meetings, exemplified in the World Festival of Youth and Students that the World Federation of Democratic Youth organized every two years. In Indonesia, the emergence of ensembles was influenced and inspired by this. However, these ensembles also developed from a local context, that is, as a kind of search for a 'national music'.

LEKRA gave these ensembles the elevated function as weapons to drive out Western music (meaning pop music), as stated in LEKRA's plenary report for 1961 delivered by Joebaar Ajoeb,

57 Interview with Karatem in Jakarta, 14-1-2010. Michael Karatem composed many songs such as *Gugur ditanah garapan* (Death while working on land owned by others), *Pemuda nyalakan api Revolusi* (Youth ignite the fire of Revolution), and arranged songs including *Bunga merah* (Red flower), *Djangan djamah Tukin* (Don't touch Tukin), *Ketaon*. After the coup of 30 September-1 October 1965, Karatem was arrested and held without trial until 1978, ten of those years (1968-1978) spent on Buru Island.

58 For more on S.W. (Supii Wishnu) Kuntjahjo, see Michael Bodden in this volume.

59 According to Mudji Astuti Martoyo, Subkat was a nickname coined by Soebronto Kusumo Atmodjo for Muchtar Embut.

secretary of LEKRA's Central Secretariat: 'Choruses like Gembira, Madju Tak Gentar, Bandung and the RRI Chorus, must be spread, become mass phenomena, so that we can find a basis for improvement, so that we are able to defeat the dreadful influence of those rotten foreign musics'.[60]

In the 1950s and early 1960s, music and dance ensembles appeared in various regions according to differing initiatives and desires. The Gembira Ensemble, for example, was established in Jakarta at the initiative of youth who were sent to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin in 1951. Madju Tak Gentar was formed at the end of 1959 in Medan. The idea for the founding of Madju Tak Gentar arose from the initiative of members of the state sponsored Sumatran arts mission, headed by the Medan-based writer Banda Harahap (aka Hr. Bandaharo), which toured to the PRC, North Korea, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1959. The idea was crystallized during the journey home on the ship Tjiwangi.[61] In Yogyakarta, the music and dance ensemble Bhineka appeared. The membership of this ensemble, formed in December 1963, was Indonesian-Chinese. *Harian Rakjat* reported its guiding principle was to confirm 'art for the people' (*seni untuk rakyat*), and its concrete action was to join in 'crushing' *ngak-ngik-ngok* music, the twist, and the like (Kusni Sulang 1964). In Pontianak, LEKRA established the Angin Timur (Eastern Wind) Ensemble that aimed to spread revolutionary songs among the people. *Harian Rakjat* reported that Angin Timur was founded to become a wind from the East that would block the influence of culture that LEKRA regarded as decadent. The members of Angin Timur were artists from various ethnic groups, including Chinese. Thus, as Roeslan wrote in *Harian Rakjat*, it could be said that Angin Timur was LEKRA's 'unity in diversity' (*bhinneka tunggal ika*) to lay the foundation for a revolutionary cultural front, recalling that the population of West Kalimantan was composed of various ethnic groups including Dayak, Malay, Javanese, Madurese, Tapanuli and Chinese (Roeslan 1964).

The mobility of these ensembles was an important factor in assuring their popularity. The Bhineka Ensemble from Yogyakarta, for example, was able to present a series of performances in regions such as Kediri, Klaten, Solo, and even outside of Java, in Lampung

60 'Paduan2 suara seperti, "Gembira", "Madju Tak Gentar", "Bandung" dan "Paduan Suara RII", harus diluaskan, dimassalkan, sehingga menemukan basis perkembangannja untuk meninggi, sehingga mampu mengalahkan pengaruh buruk musik2 asing jang busuk itu' (Joebaar Ajoeb n.d.:91). Joebaar Ajoeb (2004:113) states that the Gembira and Madju Tak Gentar Ensembles were just two of many dozens of such ensembles that paid attention to regional music.

61 'Madju Tak Gentar pemegang piagam Widjajakusuma', *Harian Rakjat*, 17-1-1965.

(Kusni 2007:29). One indication of their popularity was the fact that the ensembles performed not only for the Left. For example, as part of its artistic activity the Angin Timur Ensemble also entertained Indonesian troops on the front lines during the confrontation with Malaysia, as well as volunteers in Pontianak (Roeslan 1964).

According to Joebaar Ajoeb in his General Report to LEKRA's first congress (1959), the duty of the ensembles was to revive people's art from the oppression of (domestic) feudalism and (foreign) imperialism. He explained that what he meant by 'revive' was 'not in a negative sense of simply preventing people's art from dying out, but rather to revive it in a positive sense, especially by 'giving it new content that matches the character and aims of the August Revolution'.[62]

Each ensemble had its own unique connection with LMI and LEKRA, both as an institution and on the part of individual members. The Gembira Ensemble, for instance, was not institutionally a part of LEKRA, but several of its managers and founders were members of LEKRA (like Sudharnoto), and some were even members of the Communist Party (for example, Bintang Suradi).[63] Still, not all of Gembira's members were members of LEKRA, even though LEKRA praised it as a model, citing the Gembira Ensemble in its plenary meetings as a chorus whose membership could appropriately be broadened and whose activities could be spread to the masses in order to drive out Western (popular) music. But at the same time, Gembira was also the ensemble the government most frequently invited to perform for state functions, such as welcoming foreign dignitaries.[64]

62 This statement implied that the work of a researcher or musicologist was equivalent to the cultural activity of LEKRA as far as striving to document, gather, then study and map out the musical realities within their socio-cultural context was concerned. See the General Report of the LEKRA's Central Secretariat in the 1st Congress at Solo which was published in full in *Harian Rakjat*, 31-1-1959.

63 Bintang Suradi's original name was Van de Ster (Ster in Dutch, means star or *bintang*). Thanks to Mudji Astuti, a member of Gembira, for this information. Bintang Suradi was born of Dutch and Indonesian parents in Malang in 1923. In addition to being one of Gembira's founders, Bintang Suradi joined various activities and organizations. He was Secretary of the Organisasi Indonesia untuk Setiakawanan Rakjat Asia-Afrika (OISRAA, Indonesian Organization for Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia-Africa), and he was also noted as the personal secretary for D.N. Aidit, Chairman of the PKI's Central Committee. Bintang died in his 40s, from drowning as he swam at Pelabuhan Ratu on Saturday 22 June 1963. See 'Bintang Suradi', *Harian Rakjat*, 24-6-1963.

64 According to the explanation of Hardiani (Nanik) and Sulistiangsih (Lies) – both members of Gembira who joined the delegation to Vietnam, China, and North Korea in 1963 – in addition to performing at the Istana Negara (Presidential Palace) in Jakarta, they also frequently performed at the Bogor Palace (interview, 7-9-2009).

To better understand the activities and membership of the music ensembles, and the complexity of their relations with the government, the Left political movement, socialist ideology, and even with the PKI itself, I will now take the Gembira Ensemble as an example.

THE GEMBIRA MUSIC AND DANCE ENSEMBLE

In a meeting in the Kalibata area of Jakarta in 2009, a grandmother told of her journey 48 years before. She was Titik Kamariah, the one woman who participated in founding the Gembira Ensemble.[65] Her story is as follows:

> Back in the Old Order days, there were democratic youth and students who were sent to Europe (East Germany). That European nation organized a festival. The program inspired us about people's arts, which were featured prominently. When we returned home in February, Bintang Suradi and Sudharnoto joined our group. We sat down together and decided to form a *seni suara* (vocal arts) group (back then they were called *paduan suara* or choral group). The group had to be given a name, so there was a suggestion for 'Gembira' (glad) as something light. If we sing like that we're happy. So we tinkered with that name until we got the Gembira Chorus. Sudharnoto became the director, Bintang Suradi was the chairman, and I was the secretary.[66]

As Titik Kamariah's recollections show, the discussions in Jakarta at No. 9 Tegalan Street (where Sudharnoto was lodging at the time) and the birth of the choral group were a direct outcome of the delegation to the 1951 World Festival of Youth and Students in (East) Berlin.[67]. The founding of that chorus was directly inspired

65 Titik Kamariah, born in 1924, was the sole woman who took part in founding the Gembira Ensemble. At the age of 28, in 1951, she was a delegate to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin, as representative of the Socialist Youth.

66 Dulu zaman orde lama ada pemuda-pemuda dan mahasiswa demokratis yang dikirim ke Eropa (Jerman Timur). Negara Eropa itu mengadakan festival. Dari acara itu kita diinspirasi tentang kesenian-kesenian rakyat yang ditonjolkan. Waktu kita pulang bulan Februari, kita bertiga ditambahin Bintang Suradi dan Sudharnoto. Kita duduk bersama dan berinisiatif membentuk kelompok seni suara (dulu namanya paduan suara). Kelompok ini harus dikasih nama, maka waktu itu ada usulan Gembira ringan. Kalau kita nyanyi itukan kita gembira. Jadi diotak-atik itu namanya jadi seni paduan suara Gembira. Yang jadi dirijen Sudharnoto, yang jadi ketua Bintang Suradi, saya sekretarisnya. Excerpt from an interview with Titik Kamariah, Jakarta 10-5-2009.

67 Indonesia sent several youth delegates to the 1951 World Festival of Youth and Students from various fields, including Henk Ngantung who represented the plastic arts. Bintang Suradi was also one member of the delegation. He was living in the Netherlands at the time, and joined the Indonesia representatives at the Festival (interview with Titik Kamariah, Jakarta, 10-5-2009).

by admiration for the performances from other countries at the Berlin Festival that emphasized people's art. On 3 February 1952 this choral group was formally founded with the name Gembira.[68] According to Titik Kamariah, while the name Gembira was chosen because it was thought to represent the feeling of happiness when people sing, she explained that Soebronto K. Atmodjo said that although Gembira was a light-sounding name, within the group there was a great feeling of responsibility.

The requirements for becoming a member of Gembira were simple. It was enough to be interested in music and to take a brief vocal test and some elementary musical theory. Sudharnoto usually selected the candidates for membership according to voice type – alto, soprano, or tenor. Later, potential members were also required to complete their biodata on a form and submit a personal photograph (at that point around 150 people were registered).

Gembira had to practice in various places because it had no rehearsal space of its own. According to Amiyati, who joined in 1961, Gembira even practiced in the RRI Building. Titik Kamariah remembered that Gembira often rehearsed in the Gedung Pemuda. Yet another member of Gembira, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, indicated that Kramat Street, Gang Tengah, Kimia Street, and the RRI Building were practice spaces (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998:11).

Gembira relied upon members' dues as the main source of funds for its activities, with additional funds coming from sponsors and donations by the government and particular individuals (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998:25-6). The Government provided periodic support on occasions when Gembira was invited to perform for state ceremonies, such as Independence Day celebrations on 17 August or to welcome guests of state.[69]

In 1955, Gembira changed its name to Ensambel Njanji dan Tari Gembira (Gembira Music and Dance Ensemble).[70] Despite the name change, its activities were confined to the field of choral music without dance. Choral activities without dance were more emphasized because Gembira had initially been constituted as a chorus (*paduan suara*). According to Soebronto, the name was changed to Gembira Music and Dance Ensemble to put emphasis on songs of the People.

68 Excerpt from an interview with Titik Kamariah, Jakarta, 10-5-2009. The following information is also from this interview, and supplemented by an interview with Gembira members Mudji Astuti and Amiyati, Jakarta, 20-5-2009.

69 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998:109. Interview with Amiyati 20-5-2009.

70 See Appendix 4 in Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998, 'Pidato dasawarsa Pimpinan Umum Ansambel Njanji & Tari "Gembira" tgl. 3 Februari 1962' (Tenth anniversary speech by the leadership of Gembira Music and Dance Ensemble).

GEMBIRA'S STAGE: SINGING POPULIST AND REVOLUTIONARY SONGS

From the outset, Gembira dedicated itself to participating in the active development of national culture by performing songs imbued with ideas of peace, solidarity, and the love of freedom, themes common to the socialist countries of that era. This stance is recorded in the founding principles of Gembira as expressed by Bintang Suradi:

> [t]he principles and aims of Gembira are to defend as well as actively help develop national culture, to implant and deepen feelings of love for our country, love of peace and love for the People of the world, via the form of songs, while introducing the songs of Indonesia and foreign songs that contain love of freedom, solidarity, and peace.[71]

As well as performing songs that followed the beliefs and style of international socialism, the Gembira Ensemble also helped to develop a kind of music considered to be uniquely Indonesian, namely *keroncong*. Gembira performed new *keroncong* arrangements and added lyrics, like Iskandar's *Bandar Jakarta* (Jakarta Harbour) or *Keroncong Kemayoran* and *Jali-jali* with arrangements by Sutijoso.[72] When Gembira participated in the choral competition for the PKI's 45th Anniversary in 1965, the Chairman of the PKI, D.N. Aidit even had words of praise for *keroncong* (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998:115).

The Gembira Ensemble's repertoire was quite broad, covering socialist songs, popular European music, and Indonesian music. One can get a picture of Gembira's activities from *Harian Rakjat*'s coverage of the performance for closing ceremonies of the Police Force Cadre's School held concurrently with the anniversary of the Ensemble at the Bogor Palace on 19 March 1965. The President and Madame Hartini Soekarno attended this performance, as did the Minister in Command of the Police Force, Sutjipto; the Minister of Information, Achmadi; and foreign military attachés. In addition to *keroncong*, the songs performed at this celebration included *Djamilah*, which was an expression of the Indonesian People's sym-

71 [a]zas dan tudjuan Gembira adalah mempertahankan serta turut serta aktif mengembangkan kebudajaan nasional, menanamkan dan memperdalam rasa tjinta tanah-air, tjinta perdamaian dan tjinta kepada Rakjat sedunia, melalui bentuk njanji dan memperkenalkan lagu2 Indonesia dan lagu2 luar negeri jang mengandung isi tjinta kemerdekaan, setiakawan, dan perdamaian (Tjahajani 1965).

72 'Ansambel Gembira di Istana Bogor', *Harian Rakjat*, 28-3-1965.

pathy with the Algerian People's struggle, *Kim Il Sung Djang Qun*, the Chinese song *Bom noral*, *Funiculi funicula*, *Sajang dilale*, *Duaenam Djuli*, and closed with *Halo-halo Bandung* performed by Muchtar Embut.[73]

Gembira appeared in a variety of national and international meetings, from the State (Presidential) Palace stage to meetings and receptions for the revolutionary masses. In international meetings, the Ensemble usually had the role of welcoming foreign guests by performing Indonesian songs and songs from the countries being entertained, as, for example, when greeting North Vietnam's 'Uncle Ho', or the Soviet Union's Nikita Krushchev and K.E. Voroshilov (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998). To date, I have found no sources to indicate that Gembira was invited to participate in welcoming guests from non-socialist countries.

According to *Harian Rakjat*, Gembira's repertoire was known in China, North Vietnam, North Korea, and various Eastern European countries. The song *Siap bebaskan Irian Barat* (Ready to liberate West Irian) by Soebronto K. Atmodjo, for instance, was sung at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki, Finland, in 1962 and also recorded by Radio Peking. Similarly, Muchtar Embut's compositions like *Dari rimba Kalimantan Utara* (From the jungles of North Kalimantan) were recorded during the tour of LEKRA's arts delegation to China, North Korea, and North Vietnam in 1963.[74]

The composer Ma Co from the PRC who attended LEKRA's national conference in February 1964, reported that Soebronto K. Atmodjo had composed the majority of the people's songs for the Gembira Music and Dance Ensemble.[75] An example of folk music whose 'discovery' was attributed to Soebronto and solicited exclamations of admiration, was the song from Ambon entitled *Bila ale kembali* (When I return).

In addition to revolutionary and regional songs, Gembira also performed children's songs composed by Ibu Sud,[76] and it is said that a recording of these songs was made at Irama studio in Cikini Raya Street. This shows that Gembira didn't merely perform the songs or arrangements by its own members. Ibu Sud is known as a popular composer of children's songs; her songs later became stan-

73 'Ansambel Gembira di Istana Bogor', *Harian Rakjat*, 28-3-1965.

74 See '12 Tahun Gembira; turut mengobarkan api Revolusioner', *Harian Rakjat*, 16-2-1964.

75 *Harian Rakjat*, 4-8-1964.

76 Ibu Sud (1908-93) whose full name was Saridjah Niung Soedibjo, was born in Sukabumi. She was renowned as a composer of children's songs, especially in the educational circles of Taman kanak-kanak (kindergartens). She died at the age of 84. 'Ibu Sud', http://wapedia.org (accessed 5-7-2009).

Gembira members with other singers performing in Beijing, 1963 to mark the PRC national day of October 1.
Soloist Effie Choa (left) with, front row, left to right; Atik, Yuni (Gembira), Eveline Chauw, unknown, Amik (Gembira), Lies (Gembira), unknown, Supini (Gembira), Nanik (Gembira), unknown. Back row (males, left to right): Surekto, unknown, Tobing, others unknown. (collection of Yuni. Informants, Mudji Astuti and Amiyati)

dard fare in kindergarten education up until the 1980s. I myself learned several of her songs, for instance, *Menanam jangung* (Planting corn), *Pergi belajar* (Off to study), *Nenek moyang* (Our ancestors), *Kereta apiku* (My train), *Hai becak* (Hey pedicab), *Burung kutilang* (The bulbul) at kindergarten (1986) and I still remember them well.

FROM STAGE TO STAGE

Above and beyond its status as a vocal ensemble, Gembira was duly acknowledged as an arts and culture organization by the government. Among other things, the government's invitation to the group to attend the 1959 Cultural Congress in Bali proves this point (Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998:61). Prior to this, in August

1953, Gembira also sent a representative to the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students in Bucharest, Romania.[77]

Gembira participated in the Konfernas Seni dan Sastra Revolusioner (KSSR or Conference on Revolutionary Literature and Art) held in Jakarta from 27 August to 2 September 1964, which was organized by the Communist Party. In May 1965, Gembira, together with the Madju Tak Gentar Ensemble, LEKRA, Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia (IPPI, League of Indonesian Youth and Students), Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (CGMI, Indonesian Student Movement Concentration), Pemuda Rakjat (Youth of the People) and Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Gerwani, Indonesian Women's Movement) also participated in the Indonesian Communist Party's 45th Anniversary which took place over three consecutive nights in the Istana Olaraga Senayan (Istora, Senayan Sports Palace). A performance of dance drama (*sendratari*) titled *Djajalah partai dan negeri* (Party and country victorious) added splendour to the festivities.[78] Sudharnoto and Muchtar Embut were in charge of the music, Basuki Resobowo (a member of LEKRA's Central Secretariat), Atjoen from Permusjawaratan Pemuda Indonesia (PPI, Indonesian Youth Deliberations) and Sujud (a member of the Central Java LEKRA branch and active in dance) arranged the choreography, while the chorus was led by Michael Karatem and Su Tji Tien (Gembira), and Amir Siregar (Madju Tak Gentar). The music and dance drama were created by Muchtar Embut and Sudharnoto. The chorus for the program sang the following songs: *12 November*, *Selendang sutra* (Silk scarf), *Di timur matahari mulai bertjahaja* (the Eastern sky is brightening), *Mars Gerindo*, *Satu nusa satu bangsa* (one archipelago, one people), *Nasakom*, *Djajalah partai dan negeri*, and the *Internasionale*.[79]

According to Mudji Astuti, the celebration of the PKI's anniversary was so grand that the participants in the performance were assembled in a configuration that formed pictures of Soekarno and Aidit (Chairman of the PKI's Central Committee). This configuration, composed of 10,000 students, was organized with the assistance of Korean advisors and was led in rehearsal by Hari Safii (a member of IPPI).[80] Amir Siregar (a tenor from the Madju Tak Gen-

77 Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998:106. See Appendix 4, 'Pidato dasawarsa pimpinan umum Ansambel Njanji & Tari "Gembira" tgl. 3 Februari 1962' in Koesalah Soebagyo Toer 1998. According to Titik Kamariah, Soebronto K. Atmodjo was a member of the delegation.

78 See Michael Bodden's essay in this volume for more information on the performance of *Djajalah partai dan negeri*.

79 'Sendratari Djajalah Partai, Djajalah Negeri', *Harian Rakjat*, 30-5-1965.

80 Thanks to Hari Safii whose personal communication included a picture of the staging for that performance.

tar Ensemble) and Emi Aritonang (alto from the Madju Tak Gentar Ensemble) performed solos in this performance.[81] The singers in the chorus (combining the Gembira and Madju Tak Gentar Ensembles) for the performance numbered approximately 150.[82]

Gembira frequently performed for PKI or LEKRA sponsored events, while also performing in state programs. Because they performed so many times at the State Palace, Gembira was given the nickname 'Palace chorus'. Gembira also often performed for Indonesian National Radio, (Radio Republik Indonesia, RRI)[83] and was once commissioned to perform by the Timur Bank (a bank owned by the Partai Nasional Indonesia or Indonesian National Party).

CONCLUSION

This is a brief portrait of one strand of Indonesian music in the late 1950s and early 1960s, one that once gave extra colour to the path of Indonesian history. During those times, all sectors of society struggled (and simultaneously competed) to define national identity. Cultural organizations like LEKRA, Lembaga Seniman dan Budayawan Muslimin Indonesia (LESBUMI, Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures), Lembaga Kebudayaan Nasional (LKN, Institute of National Culture) and others arose and took an active role in thinking about and adding lustre to the Indonesian cultural stage in order to shape a national identity. Each separate institute sought, shaped and produced the pattern of 'national culture' according to its own identity. Some had a socialist nuance, some were based upon nationalism, and some were even based on religion. This was in accordance with Soekarno's elaboration of his concept of NASAKOM.

The stage of Indonesian music was a passionate one during the 1950s when concerts, festivals, shows and international-level cultural missions took place. The search for a national identity in the field of music drove LEKRA and LMI activities. Music, in LEKRA's view, had to be socially engaged and take a stand. It was not mere entertainment, but rather had to prompt society to join in attacking

81 Thanks to Mudji Astuti who provided information about Amir Siregar and Emi Aritonang through personal communication, 5-4-2010. On 5 October 1965, Mudji Astuti took Emi Aritonang to the airport to leave for school in Italy with the support of the Soekarno government.

82 Thanks to Mudji Astuti Martoyo and Hari Syafii for detailed descriptions via personal communication on 28-8-2009.

83 It is worth noting that although not discussed at greater length in this paper, RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia) played an important role in the history of Indonesian music.

the enemies of the Revolution. The song lyrics clearly demonstrate this. In addition, songs were written with lyrics that constituted responses to events occurring in friendly countries undergoing similar trials and tribulations.

LEKRA's activities consisted not only of cataloguing and nurturing music, but also in arming it with revolutionary ideology. For LEKRA, music became a kind of cultural path for international diplomacy, as well as a language of friendship and solidarity, and a way to remember or respond to an event. Music mapped out friends and foes.

The Indonesian musical stage was enlivened by the music and dance ensembles in the 1960s. Choral ensembles became a popular musical activity. Ensembles such as Gembira performed not only for leftist circles, but also took part in entertaining Indonesian troops on the front lines (in the Confrontation with Malaysia). Their flexibility in serving the needs of various circles was one factor that made them quickly gain popularity and acceptance from society as a whole.

The Central Secretariat of LEKRA also held up choral ensembles as an example of musical groups that played a part in fending off dangerous imperialist culture. Choral ensembles were regarded as bearers of music that mirrored national identity. Clearly, national identity here did not mean something pure, excavated intact from local heritage, but rather something that also borrows selectively from the treasury of world music. The socialist network greatly facilitated the opening of channels to the treasury of international music, both ideologically socialist music, and Western classical music.

Finally, how far did choral ensembles shape an identity that could be said to be national? Ultimately, what we might call national identity in music is a hybrid that mirrors a mix of several elements and influences. It was politics, in the sense of a revolutionary and anti-capitalist spirit, that then sifted, selected and discovered what could be called national and what could not.

In line with the drastic change in Indonesia's political situation post-30 September-1 October 1965, the choral ensembles, which became labelled as synonymous with leftist politics, had to leave the stage, leaving almost no trace. Suppose they did not have to bow out, how would ensembles look in the Indonesian music industry today?

Unfortunately, history allows no place for such hypothetical questions.

Translated from Indonesian by Michael Bodden

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17

Dynamics and tensions of LEKRA's modern[1] national theatre, 1959-1965

Michael Bodden

Artistic and cultural work by members of Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA, Institute of People's Culture) has tended to be ignored or summarily dismissed by scholars of Indonesian culture, and the organization itself has often been vilified as a malicious and destructive group of cultural figures who mainly produced uniform, uninteresting propaganda for the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party). Aside from a few pioneering works (Foulcher 1986; Maier 1987; Sen 1985, 1994), serious studies of the actual creative output of LEKRA cultural activists are in short supply. As a result, we really know very little about LEKRA's actual cultural practices, the exact nature of its

1 The term 'modern' may seem contentious in this context because it is usually perceived as the more positive term in an asymmetrical binary 'modern/traditional'. In fact, many 'traditional' types of theatre are still performed in the modern era and continue to evolve and change to suit the current context. They could therefore also be seen as participating in the 'modern'. The LEKRA writers and cultural workers used the term 'drama' to refer to all types of performed narratives that relied on dialogue and interactions between a number of actors portraying different characters to advance the plot – including genres generally perceived to be more strongly shaped by indigenous cultures such as *wayang kulit* and *ketoprak*. In referring to 'western-style' modern drama, LEKRA writers most often used the terms '*drama*', '*senidrama*', '*sandiwara*'. Occasionally they would contrast western-style drama to those considered to be more locally and popularly-rooted with the terms '*drama modern/sandiwara modern*' and '*drama tradisional/sandiwara tradisional*' (See for example 'Laporan tentang seni drama', *Zaman Baru* 3-4 (30 January-10 February 1959):1, 5, 9). D.N. Aidit, in his speech to the Konfernas Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner (KSSR, National Conference on Revolutionary Literature and Art) distinguished between '*drama daerah*' (regional drama) and '*drama nasional*', terms he used alternately with '*drama tradisional*' and '*drama modern*' (see Aidit 1964:34, 43-6). These differences would seem to reflect a sense of regional language performance as being more closely tied to traditional culture, with national language performance being linked to an archipelagic-wide super-culture perceived to be more 'modern'. I use the term here to suggest more recently developed styles of performance, especially dramatic performance, often modeled upon recent western forms, and most often using the national language, Indonesian, and associated with the project of a national modernity.

relationship to the PKI, or the ways in which it balanced its creations between borrowings from foreign sources and a distinctly local cultural and social grounding. Yet those who joined together in LEKRA managed to create a dynamic and varied set of cultural practices. This dynamism and variety were certainly evident in the field of modern national drama and performance, an important field of cultural production across the political spectrum during the Soekarno era.[2] In what follows I will demonstrate the vibrancy of LEKRA's work in this sphere of cultural activity with a special focus on activities in Jakarta and Central Java.[3]

In the course of this investigation it will become clear that the dominant view of LEKRA leaves much to be desired, reducing as it has the work of this group of highly patriotic, dynamic, and talented cultural workers to a caricatured image of 'art in uniform' at its very worst. I aim to challenge this dominant stereotype and thereby contribute to a deeper, more nuanced and complex understanding of the culture of Indonesia in the 1950s and early 1960s. LEKRA's dynamism, variety, and complexity can be seen in several ways.

First, in contrast to representations of LEKRA that see it as simply parroting the interests of the PKI in the sphere of arts and culture, I argue that relations between the LEKRA cultural movement and its ally, the PKI, were fluid and complex. These relations were marked both by common commitments to advancing the interests of Indonesia's poor and working class populations, as well as by tensions and conflicts that often flowed beneath the seemingly united surface of pro-Rakyat (the people), pro-Revolusi solidarity. These tensions appear to have peaked in 1964 and 1965 with the PKI's attempt to 'deepen the red' in a number of aligned cultural organizations.

Second, while some commentators have dismissed LEKRA's artistic style as 'socialist realism', I will show how members of LEKRA and its PKI ally argued about the appropriate style and terminology for LEKRA's cultural work, appropriating notions from Soviet and Chinese sources as well as fitting them to the local Indonesian context. Inspiration and borrowings from foreign sources

2 The fact that national language drama and other forms of newer, innovative performance were seen as important by many members of Indonesia's elite and intelligentsia of the 1950-1965 period can be seen in the fact that most cultural groups in many locations devoted considerable time and attention to fostering or reporting on theatrical activities of this sort. For more evidence of this, see Budianta, Chisaan, Hatley, and Plomp in this volume.

3 Elsewhere, I have examined the work of LEKRA's national language theatre workers in North Sumatra, which was perhaps the single most active area for this kind of theatre in all of Indonesia. See Bodden 2010.

show the cosmopolitan nature of this leftist cultural movement at the same time as they raise issues of originality and plagiarism, distinctively modernist issues pondered and debated by members of LEKRA. At the same time, LEKRA theatre workers were interested in the range of popular and elite local theatre forms, both old and new, which existed within Indonesia. Out of all of this emerged an assortment of forms that leftist theatre workers were helping to shape in their attempt to find more effective modes and genres for communicating with various segments of the broader Indonesian population. In contrast to Foulcher (1986), who argued that LEKRA did not really contemplate or conceptualize a new, radical kind of aesthetics in its production of poetry and fiction, I will argue that in modern national language drama and theatrical production, Aidit's KSSR speech of August 1964, the practices of Kusni Sulang, Bambang Sokawati, and Sujud in Central Java, and the turn to '*sendratari*' and dance drama spectacles in the final year of the existence of both LEKRA and the PKI, point to a range of potentially radical aesthetic ideas that were being formulated and developed through practice on a variety of local 'stages'. This search and experimentation with a variety of new forms meant that not only did LEKRA engage with 'socialist realism' and its local variant, 'revolutionary realism', but that its performance modes were multiple and dynamic.

'socialist realism', 'revolutionary realism', or 'pro-rakyat' culture?

A charge sometimes levelled at LEKRA fiction and drama is that it promoted 'socialist realism' (Ikranegara 1996:7). Certainly, as we shall see, a number of plays written by LEKRA affiliated playwrights during 1964 and 1965, were clearly designed to take up current themes of campaigns in which the PKI was engaged, and featured a kind of romantic projection of victorious struggle led by party members or other militants.[4] At the same time, a number of figures, including Pramoedya Ananta Toer and PKI Chairman D.N. Aidit, attempted to formulate ideas of 'socialist realism', or something akin to it, during the early 1960s. Furthermore, in its 'Five combi-

4 Several plays written around 1959 also seem to fit this mould. These plays take up the issue of the Sumatran regional PRRI rebellion. These include Bachtiar Siagian's *Batu merah lembah Merapi* (The red rock of Merapi valley) 1959, Zubir A.A.'s *Lagu subuh* (Dawn song) 1959, and Haznam Rachman's *Sendja di kebun* (Twilight in the fields) 1959.

nations' set of guidelines for progressive cultural workers, LEKRA proposed a combination of 'socialist realism and revolutionary romanticism' as the stylistic ideal for a brief period (c. 1959-early 1960s). Nonetheless, a number of former LEKRA members have asserted that LEKRA never adopted 'socialist realism' as its official style. Furthermore, some argue that what LEKRA did advocate was a combination of 'revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism'. That this latter formulation replaced 'socialist realism' in the thinking of much of LEKRA, especially after D.N. Aidit's speech at the National Conference on Revolutionary Literature and Art (Konfernas Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner, KSSR) in August 1964, seems to me to represent an Indonesian appropriation and reworking of these concepts to fit with local Indonesian understandings of their own conditions.

From the outset, the concept of 'socialist realism' was a fraught one, even among the Left in Soekarno era Indonesia. While left-nationalist writers like Pramoedya Ananta Toer claimed that Indonesians needed and could construct 'socialist realist' works, and indeed Indonesian literature had a legacy of works that were, step by step, moving in that direction,[5] others such as Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) Chairman D.N. Aidit argued (in 1964) that since Indonesia was not yet a socialist state, and was not yet engaged in the construction of socialism, the term 'socialist realism' was highly inappropriate for Indonesian conditions.[6] Instead, he suggested, the term 'revolutionary realism' was more suited to Indonesia's historical situation, and would retain its validity through the construction of socialism and up to the fulfilment of a communist society (Aidit 1964).

5 Pramoedya Ananta Toer 2003. While Pramoedya Ananta Toer's experience of China played a significant role in shaping his ideas about literature and the writer's relationship to society, his series of lectures given in Jakarta in November and December 1962, and later collected in book form under the title, *Realisme sosialis dan sastra Indonesia* (2003) indicate that he drew many of the ideas for his theorizing of socialist realism and Indonesian literature from Gorky and Soviet writers.

6 LEKRA figures like Joebaar Ajoeb (1990:36), LEKRA's Secretary General from 1958-1965, and Kusni Sulang, denied that LEKRA ever adopted 'socialist realism' (Kusni 2007:17-8, 168) while Oei Hae Djoen (personal conversation, Jakarta 2-7-2007) claimed that 'socialist realism was something for the future'. These statements appear to contradict Foulcher's argument (1986:110-1) that 'socialist realism' was included in the 'Five combinations' guidelines for creative work formulated by LEKRA around 1959-1960. They are also at odds with Aidit's own claim in his KSSR speech that he wished to replace 'socialist realism', which he states had been used prior to 1964, with 'revolutionary realism' (Aidit 1964:59-60). It seems that Joebaar Ajoeb, Kusni Sulang, and others took LEKRA's later position, influenced by Aidit's speech, that a combination of 'revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism' was most suitable for Indonesia, as LEKRA's definitive formulation of a guiding style.

In 1964, Aidit, generally in agreement with discussions then occurring within the PKI and LEKRA,[7] also made a number of recommendations for the form this 'revolutionary realism' should take in the modern national language theatre: plays should be realist in style, revolutionary, of high artistic quality, and, Aidit himself added, they should follow the 'class' (read 'Party') line. Furthermore, he insisted that they should take as their theme the everyday struggles of ordinary people (especially the peasants and the workers, but also, soldiers), that they should be 'popular, simple, and easily understood by the people', that they should not require expensive and cumbersome sets and props, and that they should be performed on stages in the open so as to be more accessible to greater numbers of people (Aidit 1964:32-4, 42). Aidit's vision for 'modern' 'national' theatre, at this point, was for it to be accessible, realistic, and about everyday struggles of ordinary people. There is no sense of the construction of socialism as an immediate task.

Yet both Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Aidit confirmed that whatever the term for the literature Indonesian leftists should ideally create, it was a form closely linked to the 'socialist realism' of the Soviet Union and China from which the Indonesian communists and their left-nationalist allies were drawing some of their concepts. Much like A.A. Zhdanov and Zhou Yang, authoritative figures in the defining of 'socialist realism' in the Soviet Union and China (Clark 1985; Fokkema 1965), both Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Aidit characterized this literature as combining everyday reality with the most heroic prospects – that is with a projection of the underlying dialectic of history that would suggest the coming victory of socialism. Still, both of these writers imagined their project as necessarily nationalist for the foreseeable future. Pramoedya argued that 'patriotic romanticism' was an integral part of 'socialist realism' (Pramoedya Ananta Toer 2003:69-71), and Aidit's preference for the term, 'revolutionary realism' suggests that his imaginary, too, was carefully calibrated to Indonesian circumstances, since, according to his view, 'socialist realism' would be more likely to provoke negative reactions (Aidit 1964:70-1). Furthermore, one of Aidit's key slogans (1964:25-7) for cultural work was the need to create a culture with Indonesian character (*berkepribadian dalam*

7 See for example the following articles in *Harian Rakjat*: Malmar 1964; Sabri Djamal 1964; and Didiek Sudarsono 1964. These writers make various and overlapping recommendations for modern dramas for peasants such as: they should be in local languages since knowledge of Indonesian is still limited in villages; they should be about actual problems facing farmers today; they should be able to be cheaply and easily staged on stages or in open fields and at meetings, discussions, and conferences; they should be short (20-30 minutes); and they should show the people's strength, be optimistic and so increase the peasants' morale to struggle.

kebudajaan). This notion became particularly clear in the last year before the destruction of the PKI and LEKRA, when the PKI, with Aidit's blessing one presumes, appropriated and developed further for its own purposes a newly created performance genre, the *sendratari* or artistic dance drama.

This nationalist side to LEKRA's efforts was also apparent in the memories of other LEKRA figures. For example, Joebaar Ajoeb (1990:5) maintained that the movement remained open to all styles and forms as long as the work was not anti-*rakyat*, or opposed to the August 1945 Revolution. J.J. Kusni (2007:16-7, 99-100, 104, 134-5, 139, 155, 156, 200-4) further argues that LEKRA was hardly monolithic, and that the chief element that united all its members was the idea that literature and art should serve the people and the nation. In this sense, Kusni strongly defends the notion that whatever else LEKRA might have been, its central principle was that it was a nationalist and '*kerakjatan*' (people-oriented) organization.

'revolutionary realist' dramas in practice

How were these ideas realized in actual dramatic practice? I will now look at two plays written in the last years of the Soekarno era (1964-1965) and use them to illustrate the way in which a kind of 'revolutionary realism' began to take shape in dramatic texts intended to promote and reinforce several campaigns undertaken by the Indonesian Communist Party. Then I will move on to discuss how this kind of practice began to grate against the party's own line, which the party tried its best to enforce upon its most committed and loyal cultural workers as part of tactical and strategic considerations for increasing its political power and position.

Whether LEKRA and PKI theorists felt that LEKRA cultural workers should strive to create 'socialist realism', 'revolutionary realism', or simply '*kerakjatan*' works, within the realm of modern national drama, a practice that corresponded quite closely to 'revolutionary realism' was taking shape. As Kusni Sulang (J.J. Kusni) has written, one of the key problems facing LEKRA's modern national language drama and 'Music and Dance' ensembles was a shortage of repertoire (Kusni 2007:205-16). As early as the mid-1950s, LEKRA-affiliated playwrights had begun to produce modern dramas, and in 1959-1960, writers like Bachtiar Siagian, Zubir A.A., and Haznam Rachman had even responded to the regional rebellions then threatening Indonesia's unity with anti-rebellion campaign plays, some of which featured heroic communist characters.

However, the greatest increase in plays designed to meet LEKRA's need for modern dramatic repertoire and at the same time, to take up themes of specific PKI campaigns, occurred in 1964-1965. These plays,[8] which comprise a significant percentage of all the extant modern dramas written by LEKRA writers and others sympathetic to LEKRA can usefully be analysed to ascertain what an Indonesian variant of 'revolutionary realism' had begun to look like on LEKRA's modern drama stages.

I will discuss one of these plays as more or less typical of its kind, P.H. Muid's land reform play, *Hari-hari terachir* (The last days, 1964). *Hari-hari terachir* displays several key features that are present in many of the other dramatic works of this period about land ownership and land reform. I will then provide a synopsis of another play about the land reform *aksi sepihak* (unilateral actions),[9] Kusni Sulang's *Api di pematang* (Fire in the rice paddies, 1964), and look at the way in which the playwright and party officials came into conflict over its content. What is most interesting to investigate is the extent to which these plays converge with or depart from notions of 'revolutionary realism' then circulating, their suitability to meet Aidit's suggestions for popularizing modern drama, and the ways in which they may have been affected by growing attempts by the party to control cultural production.

P.H. Muid's[10] *Hari-hari terachir* is a skillfully written 'campaign' play that pits poor peasants against a rich landlord and his accom-

8 The plays concerned in this discussion are as follows: Plays in support of land reform; P.H. Muid's *Prajurit pulang* (A soldier comes home, 1964), *Hari-hari terachir* (The last days, 1964), and *Saat-saat yang dinanti* (Long-awaited moments, 1964); K. Sunaryo's *Bebas gadai* (Free of debt, 1964) and *Sersan Suparman* (Sergeant Suparman, 1965); Utuy Tatang Sontani's *Si Kampeng* (1964); and Bachtiar Siagian's *Runtuhnya sebuah desa raja* (The collapse of a feudal village, 1965); Plays attacking capitalist bureaucrats: Sugiarti Siswadi's *Tuan Hasim* (1965); P.H. Muid's *Keluarga Murbanto* (The Murbanto family, 1965); S.W. Kuntjahjo's *Terjungkirnya seorang kabir* (A capitalist-bureaucrat is overthrown, 1965); and Putu Shanti's (also often written as Shanty) *Banting stir* (Turn the wheel hard to the left!, 1965). We could also include here several scripts that I have not been able to locate: P.H. Muid's *Jalan hanya satu* (The only road) also titled *Traktor*, and about land ownership disputes and most likely written in the same period or slightly earlier, and *Lonceng kebangkitan* (Call to struggle), an anti-imperialist play in which plantation workers seize control of an British-owned plantation; Kusni Sulang's *Api di pematang* (Land reform, 1964); Albar Djumbak's *Topan di Kaltara* (Hurricane in North Kalimantan, most likely about the Konfrontasi (confrontation) with Malaysia, 1965) and possibly several others.

9 The *aksi sepihak* were 'unilateral actions' undertaken by communist and leftist farmers' groups to implement land reform laws on the books but not enforced by local government.

10 P.H. Muid was originally from Bangka. He joined LEKRA's Film Institute in Jakarta, and was in the People's Republic of China with Basuki Resobowo editing a filmed version of *Djajalah partai dan negeri* (Party and nation victorious) when the events of 30 September and 1 October 1965 occurred. He has since lived outside Indonesia. I am grateful to Sulardjo for this information. Muid was possibly LEKRA's most prolific playwright, having written at least seven plays between 1962 and 1965.

plice, the Village Chief. The play centres on the resolution of an incident in which a peasant youth, Simin, has attacked a wealthy landlord, Ndoro Singo, hitting him with his *golok* (machete) blade. As the play develops, more information is revealed and we discover that Ndoro Singo had angrily assaulted another villager, Tarban, who had begun to cultivate land he had pawned to Ndoro Singo over eight years before. Ndoro Singo strikes Tarban, claiming the field is still his, as Tarban has not paid the necessary price to redeem it. Simin tries to intercede and is in turn attacked by Ndoro Singo. It is in this altercation that Simin's blade touches Ndoro Singo briefly and harmlessly, though Ndoro Singo is quite alarmed. The local Neighbourhood Leader and Ndoro Singo threaten Simin with arrest unless Simin will apologize, a suggestion Simin resists, insisting he is in the right. Moreover, the leader of the village branch of Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI, Indonesian Peasants' Front), Djoko, is organizing the peasants to oppose Ndoro Singo and to unilaterally implement the land reform laws, which Ndoro Singo, with the help of the Village Chief, has been resisting. Djoko supports Simin and Tarban against Ndoro Singo. The land reform law includes provision for returning all pawned lands to their owners after seven years, meaning that Ndoro Singo's claim over Tarban's land has already expired. In the end, Djoko, the police, and the land reform official arrest Ndoro Singo and the village chief for impeding the implementation of Land Reform.

Hari-hari terachir can be read on at least three levels. On the first level the story is built through several kinds of tension: curiosity about what really happened in the dispute between Ndoro Singo and Simin; tension within Simin's family, with Simin supported by his mother and criticized angrily by his father, who feels Simin and the BTI leader, Djoko, are making trouble for the village and not respecting the traditional social order; the possibility of a confrontation between Ndoro Singo's hired thugs and the peasant youth; the gradual revelation of the provisions of the land reform laws and the ways Ndoro Singo and the Village Chief have ignored them; and the eventual legal resolution of the dispute through the agency of the local police and Land-Reform Committee. The key theme at this level is the unilateral implementation of the land reform laws by the local peasants in the face of resistance by a landlord in collusion with the local Village Chief.

Djoko, Simin and the BTI peasants are branded as communists by those opposed to land reform, and they do not reject this association. Certainly, PKI slogans, tactics, and visions of the future do seem to be a strong part of the play's content. For example, we see Tarban unilaterally deciding to begin cultivating the land he had

pawned to Ndoro Singo eight years before, as he would be entitled to do after seven years according to the land reform law.[11] In support of Tarban's actions, and likely those of others in the months to come, Djoko, the BTI leader, is trying to convince the peasants of the need to act jointly in opposition to the wicked landlords (one of the *tujuh setan desa* or 'seven village devils' according to the PKI's analysis). A serious issue for the PKI and BTI during the course of the *aksi sepihak* throughout 1964 was retaining disciplined control of the unilateral peasant actions, a goal that cadres did not always achieve (Törnquist 1984:194-200). Muid's play presents the BTI leader, Djoko, as someone who is concerned to stay within the boundaries of the law and to restrain the anger of local peasants in order to avoid bloodshed at all costs. Thus the play presents the party and its progressive sympathizers as law-abiding citizens who are merely trying to look out for the interests of the rural poor and disenfranchised. Similarly, in criticizing Singo for never working in the *sawah* but merely exploiting those peasants who do, Simin also hints at the PKI/BTI slogan of 'land only for those who work it' (Mortimer 1974:288).

The play also presents Djoko's efforts to convince all the villagers to join the campaign for implementing the land reform laws, a goal the play was constructed to support in real life. Yet the piece shows an unresolved tension on this very point. Djoko and his supporters wonder why there are some in the village who still support the old feudal, hierarchical system. A key example of those who believe in the rightness of the old 'feudal' patron-client relationships is Simin's father, Tardjan. *Hari-hari terachir* is itself clearly designed to convince peasants that landlords are exploiters who oppress ordinary peasants, and yet, at the play's end, although Tardjan seems to see that he has been wrong about Singo, Muid's final stage direction is that Tardjan 'remains nervous/anxious' (*tetap gelisah*). Tardjan's nervous demeanour as the play closes suggests that he is still not certain that the new dispensation is correct, or that he worries about his own fate. In either case, the play ends without having fully resolved the core of doubt it set out to remove.

On a second level the play revolves around the notion of justice, with its adjunct ideas of truth and being 'in the right'. Justice must be gained through struggle against the exploitative, oppressive practices of the 'feudal' Ndoro Singo. At the same time, this justice is also given form in the legal code attached to the modern Indonesian state. I have already mentioned that the play represents Djoko

11 Törnquist 1984:189. The play itself actually states that the length of time pawned land may be held by the lender is eight years.

as respectful of the law and anxious to avoid provocation (and possible legal culpability) at the hands of Singo's hired thugs. He has been organizing the peasants to '*membasmi*' (eradicate) landlords like Singo, yet in this case, as we discover in the play's denouement, *membasmi* means surrendering Singo to the established legal system and prosecuting him in accordance with existing laws. Singo's refusal to conform to the provisions of land reform laws, his exploitation of poor peasants – as evidenced in the fact that he has, and can apparently support, three wives – his use of hired thugs to provoke violence, and his attempts to bribe the police, all clearly mark him as a criminal. On the other hand, Djoko seems on very friendly terms with the local police and land reform bureaucracy, and he is not concerned by Singo's threat to report Simin's attack to the police. *Hari-hari terachir* represents the local bureaucracy as supporting land reform, allowing Djoko and, eventually, Simin to feel calm in the certainty that they are in 'the right'. Since in actuality, local officials frequently sided heavily with landlords (Mortimer 1974:319), this element of the drama rather than providing a realistic portrayal appears rather to constitute a projection of the play's desire, its 'revolutionary romanticist' 'heroic prospects' for such institutional supports of the land reform law to assist in the law's implementation.[12]

On a third level, *Hari-hari terachir* combines traditional *halus-kasar* (refined-crude) codes for identifying good and bad characters with elements of modern realism and a kind of legal drama. For example, Djoko is always calm and speaks politely to his interlocutors, even when they treat him crudely, as in the scene where Tardjan confronts him about Simin's behaviour. In contrast, the Bekel, Ndoro Singo, and to a lesser extent, Tardjan, are quick to anger and behave in crude (*kasar*), and occasionally, violent fashion. This polarized human landscape suggests, as in a number of other LEKRA plays, a pattern of characterization that, though it may also be quite common in much melodrama and many Hollywood films, is in this case firmly rooted in local cultural forms such as the *hikayat* and *wayang*. It also suggests the centrality of elements of melodrama to the project of 'revolutionary realism' as it was constructed in Indonesia.

12 A counterpart to the formal legal system appears in Simin and his friends' agitated and spontaneous desire to arm and defend themselves against the provocations of Singo's goons. Here, it is crucial that Djoko calms Simin and urges him to stand firmly but non-violently against Singo. Thus, Muid's play, in advocating the PKI's call for discipline in carrying out *aksi sepihak*, has a young initiate learning from a mentor (Djoko) and developing from a reactive pawn of his own spontaneous anger and fear into a calmer, more assured, disciplined actor who is certain of his convictions. Perhaps inadvertently, this scenario parallels in such a manner the development of the 'positive hero' in many Soviet works of 'socialist realism' (Clark 1985:9-10).

Similarly, the elements of 'revolutionary realism' present indicate the ways in which Muid was attempting to work out such a form in response to discussions then occurring within LEKRA and the PKI (and months before Aidit detailed his views in the KSSR speech). First, the play is about a pressing contemporary issue, presenting it in a 'realist', straightforward style. It attempts to present much of the party's line at the time, including the need for disciplined control of the *aksi sepihak*. Furthermore, the heroes are able to emerge victorious and the support of the police and bureaucracy correspond to the projection of perceived current dialectical trends within society leading to the eventual victory of socialism. A review of a performance of the play by the local Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (CGMI, Indonesian Student Movement Concentration) branch in Semarang published in *Harian Rakjat* further noted with approval that the play did not need an extensive set or props and would thus be easy to perform for peasants anywhere (Isnandar P. 1964:2).

Hari-hari terachir is representative of the kind of 'revolutionary realist' plays then being written on the issues of land reform and land ownership rights.[13] These plays frequently mobilize older patterns of characterizing good and bad characters; show the village chiefs (*lurah*) as in collusion with unscrupulous landlords; feature peasants (usually under the leadership of PKI cadres or cadres of aligned organizations such as the BTI) undertaking defence of their land or unilateral land reform actions; have heroes who are steadfast in their convictions; argue for the rule of law and are radically egalitarian; and sometimes bring soldiers into the scenario of revolutionary change. Yet there is no talk of socialism here. This play and others like it, are much more concerned with the struggle for justice in a radical nationalist context. Thus, they take up more

13 It should be noted that anti-capitalist-bureaucrat plays follow a somewhat different pattern that, for reasons of time and space, I cannot go into in this article. Suffice it to say that the focus is as often as not on the capitalist-bureaucrat villain and his household/private affairs. This leads several of these plays, especially Sugiarti Siswadi's *Tuan Hasim* and P.H. Muid's *Keluarga Murbanto* (The Murbanto family) to introduce the theme of 'the desire to be modern run amok' that results in domestic confusion, unhappiness, and/or comedy within the household of the capitalist bureaucrat villain. Similarly, both have servant or in-law figures who contribute to the comic aspects of the plays. This suggests that Siswadi and Muid may, to varying extents, have drawn on elements of *ludruk* in their creation of modern, 'revolutionary realist' dramas. Both plays do eventually feature the heroic masses who apprehend the culprits who are highly corrupt and behave 'treacherously' towards the Indonesian state, seeking to foment a coup, being involved with shady business deals, and consorting with foreign agents. This pattern is also true, to a lesser extent, for S.W. Kuntjahjo's *Terjungkirnya seorang kabir* (A capitalist bureaucrat is overthrown). In the first two plays, however, the domestic chaos is almost as central a plot element as the villainous economic and political activities of the *kabir*.

immediate, concrete issues than the construction of socialism, and in this sense they do seem to correspond to Aidit's preference for the term 'revolutionary realism' rather than 'socialist realism'.

Yet Muid's *Hari-hari terachir*, although in many ways closely approximating Aidit's prescriptions for 'revolutionary realism', does not follow the Party's line in as detailed a fashion as some party leaders might have hoped. The way the play ends – with Tardjan's anxiety featuring prominently – is one example of this. For Muid, there is little information to tell us whether this resulted in any tensions with PKI officials or cadres. However, conflict between LEKRA cultural workers and PKI cadres and officials clearly arose in the case of one other play about land reform issues. That play was Kusni Sulang's *Api di pematang*. The story of its creation and the way it was eventually brought to the stage suggests that LEKRA members, though sympathetic to the PKI's goals and campaigns, were not uniformly willing to have their cultural work strictly controlled by the PKI.

Kusni Sulang, also known as J.J. Kusni (and by several other pen-names), is a fascinating figure in the history of LEKRA's modern drama and performance efforts. Though originally of Dayak ancestry and having grown up in Central Kalimantan, Kusni Sulang made a considerable contribution to LEKRA in Yogyakarta and the province of Central Java. Coming to Yogyakarta as a student, while still in his twenties he was made head of the Yogyakarta LEKRA branch in the early 1960s (1961 or 1962 – see Kusni 2007:62, 217-8). Along with his colleagues, Daulat Simangonsong, Z. Afif, Timbul Darminto, Saptoprio and Putu Oka Sukanta,[14] Kusni Sulang was incredibly active in the Yogyakarta branch of LEKRA's formal theatre group, Lembaga Seni Drama (LESDRA or Institute of Dramatic Art[15]), as well as in the formation of a number of mobile 'Music and Dance' troupes that represent one of several performance formats and genres with which LEKRA experimented during the Soekarno era (and which Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri discusses in her contribution to this volume). The achievements of Kusni Sulang and his collaborators need to be put into perspective. Central Java, as the

14 Here it is of interest to note that the majority of this group involved in modern theatre and performance activities in Yogyakarta's LEKRA branch were non-Javanese. Daulat Simangonsong was of Batak background, Z. Afif hailed from Aceh, and Putu Oka Sukanta was Balinese. This may explain why, based in Yogyakarta, they were more interested in national language theatre and performance than making use of more tradition-based Javanese language genres to promote progressive, left-oriented change.

15 LESDRA was both the name for LEKRA's Institute of Dramatic Art which had branches in various locales, as well as the name of groups associated with those institute branches and engaged in performing the newer style drama.

heartland of Javanese culture, possessed a plethora of lively and still extremely popular performance traditions. A number of these, such as *wayang* and *ketoprak*, attracted much more concerted attention from LEKRA and the PKI because they were able to reach large numbers of ordinary peasants and urban dwellers. Given this, the constant demand for newer, modern-style performance and theatre engagements suggested by Kusni Sulang's two autobiographical works focusing on the early 1960s seems truly remarkable.[16] This is especially so since many of the requests for performances came from villages as well as various city constituencies (Kusni 2007:41).

As noted above, Kusni Sulang and his collaborators were among the mainstays of the formal LESDRA theatre group. This group practiced regularly using the Santulredjo *sanggar* (studio) of the local left artists' group, Pelukis Rakyat, or the *sanggar* of the Seniman Indonesia Muda artists' group near the *alun-alun* field on the south side of the *kraton* (Sultan's palace).[17] LESDRA received frequent requests for performances. Often, these performances were carried out on makeshift stages or stages erected by local residents just for that performance. Performances were typically at night and lighting was often minimal.[18] The group mounted productions of plays by prominent LEKRA writers Utuy Tatang Sontani, Bachtiar Siagian, P.H. Muid, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Afif 1963a:3, 1963b:2; Kusni 2007:89), as well as work by their own members, Z. Afif and Putu Oka Sukanta. However, it also performed a work by Motinggo Boesje, a writer more closely associated with the Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional (LKN, Institute of National Culture), affiliated with the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party).[19] These plays were performed not only in Yogyakarta, but also in surrounding areas such as Purwokerto, Klaten,

16 Those works are *Di tengah pergolakan* (In the midst of upheaval, authored under the pen name 'Helmi', 1981) and *Aku dikutuk jadi laut* (I was cursed to become the sea, under the name J.J. Kusni, 2007).

17 Kusni 2007:41, 87, 106. The association of LESDRA and the Pelukis Rakyat was confirmed in a conversation with Putu Oka Sukanta, one of the other key members of the Yogyakarta LESDRA theatre group for a few years during this period (Personal conversation with Putu Oka Sukanta, Jakarta 3-7-2007).

18 Personal conversation with Putu Oka Sukanta, Jakarta 3-7-2007.

19 A list of the plays performed by the Yogyakarta LESDRA group includes: Bakri Siregar's adaptation of Dostoyevski's *Crime and punishment*; Z. Afif's adaptation of a collection of short stories by LEKRA writers, *Api '26* (Fire of '26); Bachtiar Siagian's *Batu merah lembah Merapi* (The red rock of Merapi Valley) and *Sangkar madu* (Gilded cage); Zubir A.A.'s *Lagu subuh* (Dawn song); Dahlia's adaptation of a Pramoedya Ananta Toer novel, *Orang-orang baru dari Banten* (The newcomers from Banten); Utuy Tatang Sontani's *Si Kabayan* and *Bunga Rumah Makan* (Flower of the restaurant); Putu Oka Sukanta's *Warna merah langit cerah* (Clear red sky); Motinggo Boesye's *Barabah*; P.H. Muid's *Kemarau* (Drought) and '*Traktor*' /*Jalan hanya satu*; ('Tractor'/ Only one road); and Tan Sin Hwat's *Galangan kapal 26* (Dockyard 26) (Afif 1963a, 1963b; Kusni 2007:89).

and Salatiga (Afif 1963a:3). Yogyakarta's LESDRA was also responsible for organizing a drama festival in which LESDRA, Teater Muslim, and Rendra's Studi Grup Teater Yogya all participated. This festival highlighted the widespread interest in modern national language theatre among differing cultural and political groupings.[20]

Kusni Sulang seems to have been a pivotal figure in performance activities, for not only was he involved in the LESDRA theatre group, but he was also central in the development of several mobile 'music and dance' ensembles including Merah Kesumba, the Lembah Merapi ensemble in Klaten consisting of young peasants, and Bhinneka, which was composed chiefly of Chinese-Indonesian youth. Though there were itinerant troupes performing *wayang, sandiwara*, and possibly other forms during the Japanese Occupation and the 1945-1949 Revolution/War of Independence in Indonesia,[21] and though LEKRA groups in Medan, Jakarta, and elsewhere developed large Ansambel Tari-Nyanyi (Music and Dance Ensembles), LEKRA Yogyakarta's mobile music and dance ensembles were still something relatively new,[22] and certainly different to any other LEKRA performance undertakings. These 'mobile' ensembles were designed to be able to move quickly and to put on several variety show-style performances in one night in different locations for peasants and urban slum dwellers. Such ensembles would not only perform dances, music, and songs, but might declaim poetry or perform dramas, dance dramas (*sendratari*), and comedy routines (Kusni 2007:27-8). The central strategic

20 Kusni 2007:42-4. Sulang does not give a date for this festival. Nonetheless, given that Teater Muslim's founding dates to its first production, *Iblis* (Devil) on 25 September 1961 (Mohammad Diponegoro 1983:60), and the fact that Rendra left for study in the United States in 1964, it is most likely this festival took place sometime between late 1961 and late 1963. From late 1963 on, tensions among the various cultural groups began to increase.

21 For use of wayang in the Independence struggle years, see Brandon 1967:286-8. North Sumatra seems to have been an active area for the use of *sandiwara* starting in the Japanese Occupation period at the very latest, with touring groups, organized by nationalists in conjunction with the Japanese Occupation administration, who performed *sandiwara* and other kinds of acts (Bachtiar Siagian n.d.; Mohammad Said 1973:158). In the immediate post-war years, a number of *sandiwara* troupes were formed in the area, including Ahmad C.B.'s troupe, Asmara Dana, many of them engaging in anti-Dutch theatre (Tan Sooi-Beng 1993:166-70; see also Plomp in this volume).

22 According to Hui Yew-Foong (2008 and forthcoming), there were similar agit-prop groups developed between 1947 and 1953 among ethnic Chinese communities living in West Kalimantan. It is not clear whether Kusni Sulang, originally from Central Kalimantan, or his colleagues would have been aware of this. Given his willing admission of the influences on the formation of his group's ideas for the mobile 'Music and Dance' ensembles, the most likely conclusion is that this was a phenomenon isolated mainly in the ethnic Chinese communities of West Kalimantan. Thus, for the young LEKRA activists, and in real terms, this form was still relatively uncommon and new for Indonesia.

goals of creating such ensembles were to build and strengthen cultural networks among the lower levels of society, as well as, in turn, to make cultural workers aware of the people's desire for art (Kusni 2007:31-2).

Though different factors may have played a role in choosing the size and composition of Lembah Merapi and Bhinneka (40-50 members each), in the case of the Merah Kesumba ensemble, the selection of group members was based upon an extremely rigorous set of criteria. Kusni Sulang recalls that out of more than 300 applicants, only six were chosen. Group members had to be able to possess the stamina necessary for great mobility, to have the highest technical abilities in singing, dancing, acting, and to be able to play several instruments. They also had to have a strong understanding of politics and ideology. In addition, members of Merah Kesumba were also chosen to represent a variety of ethnic groups so as to symbolize the diverse ethnic composition of Indonesia itself (Kusni 2007:73-4). This in itself was an innovative strategy for the relatively homogenous, ethnically Javanese villages of Central Java.

Inspiration for this kind of performing ensemble came from several sources. Kusni Sulang and friends were greatly impressed by two Japanese touring groups, the Zen Zhin Zha Kabuki troupe, and a music and dance ensemble called Shinseisaku-za that toured Java in the early 1960s. The latter, in particular, made a strong impression on the young LEKRA activists for its energy, technical ability in creating performance decor, and ability to structure a versatile performance full of variety, mobility, and aptitude for taking up the actual problems of everyday life in its performances (Kusni 2007:28-9). The form of Merah Kesumba, as a smaller, mobile ensemble, was also greatly inspired by an article LEKRA members had read about a Chinese mobile performance troupe, Ulan Uchi, operating in Mongolia, which was composed of only a small number of performers who were skilled in various arts and extremely mobile (Kusni 2007:77).

Kusni Sulang argues that Merah Kesumba was well received wherever it performed because it was perceptive of local needs and conditions. The group wore all black uniforms with red scarves or handkerchiefs tied about their throats. They would usually open a performance by introducing their members to the audience as a way of suggesting the Indonesian quality of '*bhinneka*' (diversity). They would then follow the audience's appreciative applause by singing a part of their signature poem, Njoto's *Merah kesumba*,[23] before proceeding to the rest of the program. This might even

23 For the words for this poem, see Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri in this volume.

include the performance of a short play by P.H. Muid or another LEKRA writer. Often, the group had few props and on some occasions even had to use charcoal for makeup and decoration. Kusni Sulang relates that a key revelation drawn from the group's experiences was that ordinary Indonesians were not '*bodoh*' (stupid) and were highly intelligent, perceptive, and able to enjoy quality art (Kusni 2007:73-7).

Merah Kesumba, as mobile agit-prop variety show, was successful enough that Kusni Sulang and his colleagues planned to form several more such groups. The mobile Ansambel Tari-Nyanyi had seemed to find a formula enabling it to convey a highly artistic form of agit-prop to the lower levels of Javanese society, most remarkably, using, at least in part, the Indonesian language rather than Javanese. Yet the outbreak of the events of 30 September and 1 October 1965, and the national tragedy that followed, prevented the founding of other such groups.

It was a very different kind of production, however, that caused friction between Kusni Sulang and PKI cadres, including members of the Central Committee. Assigned by the party to create a play about land reform and farmers' issues that would be performed by farmers, Kusni Sulang was briefed by D.N. Aidit himself, as well as other cadres, before returning to Central Java to begin work. Here, the PKI and LEKRA activists came up with a radical and innovative form for the actual creation of a performance: to base the production on the experiences of actual peasants, with a select group of peasants themselves performing most of the roles.

Having written a draft script based upon his observations during extensive *turba* (*turun ke bawah* or 'going down' to the masses) experiences, and having subsequently received criticism and suggestions from party leaders in Semarang, Kusni Sulang then went to Klaten where, working with the local party leader, he identified a group of potential peasant-actors (Helmi 1981:70-3). After rehearsals, two trial runs of the play were performed in Klaten. At the first, for party cadres and organization activists, Kusni Sulang and his actors received more suggestions for changes. Following these revisions, the second trial run was staged before an audience of over 600 peasants involved in *aksi sepihak*. The play was then taken to the Central Java provincial capital of Semarang where it was again performed twice, once for cadres and then for the general public. Finally, it was taken to Jakarta and performed at the Pasar Minggu performance hall as part of the KSSR conference in August 1964 after first being performed several times for LEKRA and PKI leaders (Helmi 1981:70-5; Kusni 2007:196). This rigorous set of performances seemed designed both to provide feedback from cadres

and to test the work's ability to communicate its messages to ordinary villagers. In this way, it can be seen as an attempt to meet the suggestion of Aidit and others that the work be simple and accessible to the masses.

Briefly, *Api di pematang* tells the story of a young Javanese peasant woman whose family is in debt to a landlord and must sell him their land. The young woman must also work for this landlord as a servant and she is forced to endure several hardships, including the landlord's attempt to rape her. When the land reform laws are passed, the young woman sees an opportunity to get her family's land back and joins the local farmers' organization. There she falls in love with the young man who leads the farmer's group. They struggle to surmount a number of obstacles thrown in their path by the landlord and the State itself. With the strong support of the other farmers under the leadership of the organization, they eventually win her land back (Helmi 1981:69-70).

From this brief description, it is evident that this play shares a number of features in common with Muid's *Hari-hari terachir* and other land reform dramas: scheming evil landlords; heroes who belong to Left or communist-affiliated organizations; the triumph of peasant forces in the end. What is most interesting is that Kusni Sulang's account of the criticisms received, and his reactions to them, show both a belief that party cadres' criticism and discussions helped in some ways to produce a better play, but also, that several criticisms made by party members seemed, according to what he had observed in his *turba* exercises, to contradict the realities of village life. Kusni Sulang felt that these criticisms, and the changes forced upon him so as to make the play match cadres' understanding of the party's line at the time, caused the play to give a distorted and false representation of the existing situation. Before *Api di pematang* had even been staged, for example, cadres told him that the work's representation of the state and landlords as exploitative and oppressive towards the peasants would have to be changed. Their reasoning: the party's theoretical line maintained that the struggle for state power was between the pro-*rakyat* and anti-*rakyat* forces, and that there were accordingly both pro-*rakyat* and anti-*rakyat* landlords as well as similar divisions within the state bureaucracy. Such a line may have well accorded with the PKI's desire to maintain its alliance with the PNI (Indonesian National Party) and NU (Nahdlatul Ulama – a traditionalist Muslim party), whose supporters included many landlords, but in Kusni Sulang's experience, and those of the peasants with whom he had lived and worked, the treatment of peasants by landlords was uniformly exploitative regardless of party affiliation (Mortimer 1974:312-22; Helmi 1981:70-2).

At first, Kusni Sulang wanted to withdraw as writer of the script if the Party insisted on such changes. The provincial party leaders refused to allow this, reaffirming that he had been assigned this task and accusingly asking him if he wanted to deviate from the Party's line. Feeling vulnerable and unprepared to challenge the Party's theory, Kusni Sulang eventually submitted (Helmi 1981:72-3). Furthermore, following the KSSR performance in Jakarta, Kusni Sulang was accused by Sudisman (a member of the PKI's Politburo) of being a 'revisionist', based on Sudisman's analysis of even the revised *Api di pematang*. Kusni Sulang was so angry he refused to have his picture taken with Sudisman and Aidit (Kusni 2007:196-7). A similar process of criticism, to which Kusni Sulang objected, was repeated with his next play, *Tanah Ketaon* (Land at Ketaon). Originally to be performed with the same group of peasant actors from Klaten, the work was later given to one of the 'Music and Dance' ensembles, the Chinese-Indonesian group, Bhinneka, but never performed because of the events of September/October 1965. Again, Kusni Sulang felt humiliated by the experience and regretted the fact that he did not have a strong enough grasp of theory or enough belief in his own principles to resist the PKI's pressure (Helmi 1981:76-8).

TENSIONS BETWEEN LEKRA AND THE PKI

Kusni Sulang's experiences were but one piece of a larger fabric of tension then arising between the PKI and LEKRA. In 1964, according to a number of accounts, the PKI sought to convince many sympathetic and affiliated organizations to declare themselves 'communist' organizations. LEKRA was not the only organization subjected to this appeal. As Wieringa (2002:192-212) recounts, the women's organization, Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Gerwani, Indonesian Women's Movement) came under much the same pressure at this time, as may also have been the case for the student organization, CGMI, and other organizations.[24]

LEKRA rejected this step. Oei Hae Djoen,[25] a member of PKI at the time and one of eleven LEKRA Central Secretariat members, recalls that although the majority of members of LEKRA's Central Secretariat were also members of the Communist Party, LEKRA's

24 Personal conversation with Oei Hae Djoen, Jakarta, 2-7-2007.

25 Variant spellings of his name include Oey Hae Djoen, Oey Hai Djoen, Oey Hay Djoen and Oei Hai Djoen.

Secretariat repeatedly refused to officially become a communist organization. As Oei recalled:

> And there was resistance to this. As in LEKRA, for example, where I was involved, LEKRA had a Central Secretariat. It consisted of eleven people, you know […] The Chair was Joebaar Ajoeb, the Vice-Chairs were Henk Ngantung and Sudharnoto. The rest were members of the Secretariat. Including myself. Now, of these eleven people, the majority were communists. But not all of them. The majority were PKI, including Njoto, you see. Now, we were invited repeatedly to discuss by the party, by the PKI, whether we would change LEKRA to become *pronounced onderbouw*. We refused. The majority of us refused. I was among those who refused. Indeed, I felt that you can't do that, command artists like that. So we refused.[26]

LEKRA's former Secretary General, Joebaar Ajoeb, has also stressed this point, even arguing that Njoto, himself then a member of the PKI's Central Committee, had voted with the majority of the Secretariat in rejecting the PKI's initiative (Joebaar Ajoeb 1990:5-6). Martin Aleida maintains that Hr. Bandaharo (Banda Harahap), a LEKRA and PKI member and PKI Central Committee member in charge of cultural matters, also did not agree that LEKRA should be officially 'red'.[27]

The reason for LEKRA's refusal[28] most likely followed Oei Hae Djoen's line of thought. Many LEKRA members, sympathetic as they were to some of the key issues taken up by the PKI, strongly resisted the idea that writers and artists should be subordinated to direct command by the party. Their comments suggest they viewed artists and artistic creation as something inherently outside the realm of direct political control, sympathetic as particular artists might be to particular parties or causes. Kusni Sulang, for instance,

26 Dan ini terjadi perlawanan. Seperti di Lekra saja, di mana saya ada, Lekra itu ada Sekretariat Pusat. Itu kan terdiri dari sebelas orang […] Ketuanya, Joebaar Ajoeb, Wakil Ketuanya Henk Ngantung dan Sudharnoto. Kemudian yang lainnya anggota Sekretariat. Termasuk saya. Nah, di antara sebelas orang ini, sejumlah besar itu memang PKI. Tapi ndak semua PKI. Bagian besar PKI, termasuk Njoto yang begitu, iya. Nah, kita berkali-kali memang diajak diskusi oleh Partai, oleh PKI, untuk mengubah Lekra itu menjadi pronounced onderbouw. Kami menolak. Bagian besar dari kami menolak. Saya juga termasuk yang menolak. Saya memang berpendapat, tidak bisa, seniman itu direger begitu. Jadi kita menolak. Personal conversation with Oei Hae Djoen, Jakarta, 2-7-2007.

27 Personal conversation with Martin Aleida, Jakarta 23-7-2007.

28 In separate conversations, former LEKRA members Putu Oka Sukanta, Martin Aleida, and Amarzan Ismail Hamid, have all affirmed this account. Personal conversation with Putu Oka Sukanta, Jakarta, 3-7-2007; Martin Aleida, Jakarta, 23-7-2007; Amrazan Ismail Hamid, Jakarta, 3-7-2007.

has related that he and many members of Yogyakarta's LESDRA had an extreme dislike of '*main perintah*' (order giving) and '*komandoisme*' (having to create on command) in the arts. Kusni Sulang himself had even written an article published in a Semarang daily newspaper stating as much, an act for which he was strongly criticized as 'liberal' (Kusni 2007:99-100, 197). Similarly, Amarzan Ismail Hamid stated that:

> And as far as I was concerned, if the Party started interfering directly in LEKRA's organization, then it would no longer be of any interest to me […]. Why? It meant that in my analysis it would be rather authoritarian, you see. Rather different than the character of arts workers.[29]

The KSSR conference, held from 27 August-2 September 1964, seemed an attempt to pressure LEKRA to accept PKI leadership in the arts, or failing that, to create a basis for the PKI to build an organization more amenable to Party direction. It was at this conference that Aidit gave his speech on literature and the arts, and prominent LEKRA figures such as Hr. Bandaharo (Banda Harahap)[30] and Bachtiar Siagian[31] gave speeches of welcome. Many other LEKRA members attended and participated in KSSR sponsored competitions to write plays, short stories, criticism, and poetry in the following months.

A number of LEKRA activists were also convinced that the PKI had groomed S.W. Kuntjahjo, a poet and playwright who had long been writing about workers' culture, to replace Joebaar Ajoeb as Secretary General of LEKRA in the event that LEKRA did declare itself a communist organization.[32] This suspicion was most likely fostered by the fact that Kuntjahjo was Chair of the KSSR. Fears about the possible consequences of direct party control were further heightened by the proceedings of the first anniversary of the KSSR in August 1965. Oei Hae Djoen asserted that one part of the anniversary celebrations held in the SBKA building near Manggarai Station included an '*apel seniman*' (artists' roll call/muster).[33]

29 Dan buat saya, kalau Partai campur tangan langsung ke organisasi Lekra, itu sudah bukan hal yang menarik lagi[…]. Kenapa, artinya dalam rumusan saya agak otoriter, iya. Agak berbeda dengan karakter pekerja seni. Personal conversation with Amrazan Ismail Hamid, Jakarta, 3-7-2007.

30 'KSSR dibuka di Istana Negara', *Harian Rakjat*, 28-9-1964.

31 'Sedikit tjatatan dari K.S.S.R.', *Harian Rakjat*, 6-10-1964.

32 Personal conversation with Amrazan Ismail Hamid, Jakarta, 3-7-2007; Putu Oka Sukanta, Jakarta, 3-7-2007.

33 Personal conversation with Oei Hae Djoen, Jakarta, 2-7-2007; Martin Aleida, Jakarta, 23-7-2007.

Such an event, if indeed it occurred, struck some LEKRA members as demeaning to arts workers in its suggestion of an almost military regimentation. Amarzan Ismail Hamid contends that the Central Secretariat of LEKRA was even preparing to dissolve LEKRA if the PKI attempted to force LEKRA to declare itself a communist organization.[34]

Still, the participation of many LEKRA members in KSSR and its activities suggests that among LEKRA members, there was significant support for KSSR. That LEKRA's Central Secretariat refused to officially declare LEKRA a communist organization would appear to indicate, however, that LEKRA's central leadership preferred to keep LEKRA aligned but separate, while also supporting the PKI's own efforts at building a second, overlapping cultural organization based upon the KSSR.

SENDRATARI AND THE PKI'S DJAJALAH PARTAI DAN NEGERI (PARTY AND NATION VICTORIOUS)

Sendratari, or Seni-Drama-Tari (artistic dance drama) in the form of the 'Ramayana Ballet' was first created and performed at Prambanan in Java in the early 1960s, with the form receiving rapid development in Bali after 1961 (DeBoer 1989:181, 1996). What was new about this form was the fact that the narrative was told completely through dance and music, with no dialogue. Later Balinese versions added a *juru tandak* (singer) who, sitting with the *gamelan* orchestra, vocalized bits of dialogue and literary quotations that reinforced and partially explained the pantomime of the dancers (DeBoer 1996:160). The interest of the PKI and LEKRA in *sendratari* as a form for conveying socialist and leftist messages seems to have mushroomed in late 1963 and 1964, culminating in May, 1965 in the spectacular dance drama relating the history of the Indonesian Communist Party, *Djajalah partai dan negeri*.

Though LEKRA and the PKI began to take an interest in *sendratari* in 1963-1964, the ground for this interest appears to have been fertilized well before the *sendratari* form was itself created. According to Hersri Setiawan, one of the main reasons cultural workers of the Left began to pursue the development of this new dance drama form for their own purposes may have been the popular success of the Central Javanese choreographer, Sujud, with his dance drama *Blandjo wurung* (Can't make ends meet) which was created and per-

34 Personal conversation with Amrazan Ismail Hamid, Jakarta, 3-7-2007.

formed circa 1955-1956. This dance drama, taking as its theme the spiraling prices of goods, perceived as resulting from the incompetence and malfeasance of government officials who were in league with foreign capitalists, began to take shape around a song composed by Sujud (possibly in collaboration with his wife), *Blandjo wurung*. Dance was added to make the piece visually communicative, and since the song included elements of dialogue, a minimal, fragmentary libretto was also constructed for the piece. The song lyrics and the dialogue were in Javanese, and gamelan accompaniment provided the music.[35] This fitted with both LEKRA's and the PKI's interest in building a 'national culture' based on what it considered to be 'good'[36] traditions and the revolutionary present, as well as the idea of some leftist drama observers that theatre should be in local languages so as to more easily connect with larger audiences.

Following Sujud's groundbreaking work of the mid-1950s, then, the new *sendratari* form further encouraged LEKRA choreographers to create more dance dramas in the *sendratari* style relying on dance movement and music without dialogue: Drs. Sunardi created a dance drama (without song), titled *Aksi enampat* (Action '64), on the theme of the unilateral actions by peasant groups to implement the government's land reform laws. This particular work featured Sunardi himself as the demon, Rahwana, personified in a landlord, while Bambang Sokawati danced the role of the politically conscious peasant. The piece was taken on tour to Vietnam, China, and North Korea.[37] The KSSR conference of August 1964 also featured a *sendratari* titled *Saidjah dan Adinda*, based on Bakri Siregar's adaptation of a fragment from Multatuli's *Max Havelaar*. This piece was choreographed by Bambang Sokawati, with musical accompaniment by another Yogyakarta LEKRA member, Djoni Trisno. According to a review of the work appearing in *Harian Rakjat*, the lead dancers displayed some ability to base their dance movements in classical Javanese dance, while the reviewer found it difficult to say which, if any, regional dance tradition many of the others drew upon, noting only that there seemed to be some elements of Melayu dance style visible (Afif 1964:3). Here, we find LEKRA activists searching for the appropriate regional traditions upon which

35 Personal conversation with Setiawan, Jakarta, 27-6-2007; and email communication, 1-3-2010.

36 Though never explicitly defined, Aidit's KSSR address suggests that progressive values include anti-feudalism, anti-imperialism, and pro-people stances. The same criteria would likely also apply to separating out 'good' traditions from those that needed to be changed or replaced.

37 Personal conversation with Setiawan, Jakarta, 27-6-2007.

to build dynamic modern dance dramas. This was another indication of the 'critical nativism', or selective search for an indigenous cultural basis for modern Indonesian culture undertaken within LEKRA, as well as by other cultural groups of the era. However, the fact that this *sendratari* was presented at the KSSR, the PKI's attempt to force LEKRA into a more subordinate organizational alliance, hinted at the PKI's interest in this form as well, and foreshadowed its colossal s*endratari* production of 1965, *Djajalah partai dan negeri*.[38]

Dance drama was possibly so alluring to the PKI and some members of LEKRA because it seemed to fit with Aidit's idea of creating simple, accessible works, since dance movements allowing for direct visual expression of actions and themes could make a less complex text possible. This would in turn be combined with music and song, media capable of significantly heightening a work's emotional content, to produce stronger pathos and heroic effects. An additional stimulus for the creation of *Djajalah partai dan negeri* may have come from the knowledge many leftists would have had of the Chinese dance drama spectacle, *Dongfang Hong* (The East is red, 1964), which represented the history of the Chinese Communist Party in larger than life, heroic style.

Djajalah partai dan negeri was performed for three consecutive nights from 26-28 May 1965, as part of the celebrations of the PKI's 45th anniversary. The play was performed in the Istora Stadium in Senayan and drew crowds numbering in the thousands for each night. The production was said to involve over 150 dancer/actors, 400 singers, 30 musicians, and a stage crew of 50.[39] Briefly, this *sendratari* claimed to be a representation of the history of the Indonesian Communist Party from its inception in 1920 to May of 1965. Slide projectors were used to project images and settings onto a huge backdrop behind the stage (Banda Harahap 1965b:2) and the musical score was anchored in a number of patriotic and commu-

38 Comments made by Banda Harahap in relation to *Djajalah partai dan negeri* confirm this impression. According to Harahap, 'Work on modern *sendratari* with themes of the revolutionary present, in this field, in this case, is serious Party work and not merely for serving up entertainment'. ('Kerdja sendratari modern dengan tema kekinian jang revolusioner, dibidang ini, dalam hal ini, adalah kerdja Partai jang serius, bukan sekedar untuk menghidangkan hiburan.') See 'Tingkatkan dan kembangkan "Djajalah Partai dan Negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 6-6-1965.

39 See 'Pers ibukota tentang "Djajalah Partai dan Negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-6-1965. The large numbers of people involved came from a variety of leftist organizations including LEKRA, CGMI, IPPI (Ikatan Persatuan Pelajar Indonesia, League of Indonesian Youth and Students), Pemuda Rakjat (the PKI's youth wing), Gerwani, and two large choral ensembles, Maju Tak Gentar from Medan and Gembira from Jakarta. In addition, a number of the dancers were members of the PPI (Permusyawaratan Pemuda Indonesia, Indonesian Youth Deliberation, the youth wing of the Chinese-Indonesian organization, BAPERKI (*Harian Rakjat*, 30-5-1965; and personal conversation with Hersri Setiawan, Jakarta, 27-6-2007).

nist songs such as the national anthem (*Indonesia Raya*), *Fajar menyingsing* (The dawn is breaking), the *Internasionale*, *Nasakom bersatu* (Nasakom Unite) and Sundanese popular songs.[40] Folk dances like the Madurese *Tari nelayan* (Fishermen's dance) were incorporated into the choreography, as were several new creations by the choreographic team of Sujud, Basuki Resobowo, and Atjoen, namely the *Tari buruh* (Workers' dance), *Tari tani* (Farmers' dance), *Tari bambu runcing* (The sharpened bamboo pike dance), and *Tari bendera* (Flag dance).[41] Each of the performance's four acts contained three scenes, with each scene ending in a tableau. However, unlike many *sendratari*, *Djajalah partai dan negeri* did contain a verbal component: Introductions preceded each of the four acts in order to give a brief synopsis of the historical events which the dancers would present in that section of the performance.[42]

The plot of the performance follows the rather linear trajectory of Indonesian nationalism, highlighting at every possible point the contributions of the PKI. Beginning with the founding of the party, the first act culminates in the rebellions of 1926 and their harsh suppression by the Dutch colonial government. Act two relates the anti-colonial actions of 'Ship Seven' in 1933 and portrays the PKI as central in organizing an anti-fascist front from 1935 on, and in carrying out underground resistance to the Japanese. Act three concerns the heroic independence struggle against the Dutch and laments the Round Table Agreement of November 1949 as an unfavourable agreement for Indonesia that was masterminded by the United States. It suggests that the PKI led opposition to the agreement, an opposition that later became the backbone of Indonesian anti-imperialism. The final act focuses on the 'new path' taken by the PKI under the Aidit group, though interestingly, only Aidit himself is named. It depicts the PKI's startling success in the 1955 general elections, features the Party's efforts in 'defeating' the 'anti-unity, anti-democracy, and anti-Communist' Masjumi-PSI coalition in that poll, and promises that the PKI will work to carry to completion the demands of the 1945 revolution. The performance ends with a short piece of poetry written by Aidit, including the line, *Djajalah partai dan negeri*, from which the title of the piece is derived.

40 'Pers ibukota tentang "Djajalah Partai dan Negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-6-1965.

41 Banda Harahap 1965a:4. On this point see also 'Pers ibukota tentang "Djajalah Partai dan Negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-6-1965.

42 The synopses of each act are printed in 'Djajalah partai, djajalah negeri', *Harian Rakjat*, 30-5-1965. The use of the introductions to preface and explain what will happen in each act is noted in the *Bintang Timur* review reprinted in 'Pers Ibukota tentang "Djajalah partai dan negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-6-1965.

There was a fair amount of commentary on the performance in the PKI's own news daily, *Harian Rakjat*, as well as in several other Jakarta dailies, some of which were also reprinted in *Harian Rakjat* on 13 June. In the 6 June edition, Banda Harahap (Hr. Bandaharo), the Party Central Committee's Head of Cultural Affairs commented that *Djajalah partai dan negeri* was only an initial effort and that it would pave the way for the production of bigger and better quality works in the future. He affirmed that the party was very serious about developing the *sendratari* form, and not simply for the purpose of entertainment. Harahap saw *sendratari* as a 'tool of our struggle' ('*alat perjuangan kita*', Banda Harahap 1965a:1, 4).

Sympathetic media, such as *Bintang Timur* (aligned with the leftist party, PARTINDO) and *Pantjawarna* heaped lavish praise on the production. Both papers stressed that the work was a strong contribution to building a Indonesian culture with its own character ('*berkepribadian dalam kebudayaan*').[43] Of the reviews reprinted in *Harian Rakjat*, only that from *Angkatan Bersendjata* gave a negative review, stressing that the dance drama did not possess much emotional force, and turning from aesthetics to content, that it did not present an accurate portrayal of the proclamation of independence.[44]

In mid-July, Banda Harahap wrote a reply to the *Angkatan Bersendjata* in which he stressed that the scene of the proclamation did not include a reading of the entire document, but was only intended to symbolically represent the act of the proclamation (Banda Harahap 1965b:2). Harahap then discussed the weaknesses of the production and called for a more careful consideration of which local dance and movement traditions would be most appropriate for future *sendratari*. For *Djajalah partai dan negeri*, he suggested that Balinese and Malay dance movements would work best as they expressed dynamism and joy respectively (Banda Harahap 1965b). Two things were important in Harahap's response. First, that the issue of the representation of the proclamation had become a point of contention, and second, that PKI and LEKRA cultural workers were seriously discussing how best to create an authentic postcolonial culture using traditional and folk forms already available within Indonesia.[45]

These issues also appeared in the comments of some individual LEKRA members over 40 years later. Hersri Setiawan described with

43 'Pers ibukota tentang "Djajalah Partai dan Negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-6-1965.

44 'Pers ibukota tentang "Djajalah Partai dan Negeri"', *Harian Rakjat*, 13-6-1965.

45 The centrality of this issue was confirmed by Bambang S.D. (Most likely Bambang Sokawati D.) (1965) in a later article, 'Sedikit tentang "Djajalah partai dan negeri"; Choreografi jang berkepribadian sebagai aspek penting', *Harian Rakjat*, 13 June 1965.

great interest the differences in movement styles between a later Jakarta performance (in which many of the dancers were of Indonesian-Chinese background and used dance movements reminiscent of Chinese acrobatics) and later performances held in Central Java.[46] Less positively, and more in line with Harahap's comments, Amarzan Ismail Hamid criticized the basis for dance movements in the dance drama. He felt Indonesia had no national ballet or dance company with a solid foundation in local dance movement, making the movements of the dancers a *gado-gado* (hotchpotch).[47]

The presentation of the proclamation also raised doubts and criticism among individual LEKRA members. Martin Aleida argued that in the proclamation of independence scene the *sendratari* left out Mohammad Hatta's name as one of the co-proclaimers of independence, mentioning only President Soekarno. For Aleida, this was *konyol* (ill-mannered, stupid, crazy), something that shouldn't have been done and that served no good purpose.[48] Oei Hae Djoen, himself a member of the Communist Party, characterized this omission as a 'communist distortion'.[49]

But LEKRA members also had other reservations about the production. Amarzan Ismail Hamid had been in China in 1964 and seen a performance of the colossal dance drama, *Dongfang Hong*. For him, *Djajalah partai dan negeri*, first performed in May 1965, seemed objectionable as a clear imitation.[50] Similarly, Sulardjo, a member of the stage crew of Medan's LESDRA theatre group, was surprised and disappointed that *Djajalah partai dan negeri* appeared to be in large part a copy (*jiplakan*) of *Dongfang Hong*, a film of which he had seen.[51] Here, 'originality' proved an important component in the artistic ideology and critical assessments of some LEKRA members. This is in line with Foulcher's general argument that many cultural workers within LEKRA, and the LEKRA movement itself, shared many aspects of aesthetic ideology with their non-Left and anti-communist cultural rivals.

But these criticisms, some of which appear to have been voiced at the time of the preparations for and performance of *Djajalah*

46 Personal conversation with Setiawan, Jakarta, 27-6-2007.

47 Personal conversation with A.I. Hamid, Jakarta, 3-7-2007.

48 Personal conversation with Aleida, Jakarta, 23-7-2007.

49 Personal conversation with Oei, Jakarta, 2-7-2007.

50 Amarzan Ismail Hamid felt the same way about Aidit's KSSR speech of August 1964, much of which he felt was simply an imitation of Mao's Yenan Forum talks. Oei Hae Djoen also felt Aidit's KSSR talk was an imitation. The word used was the derogatory '*jiplakan*'. Personal conversation with A.I. Hamid, Jakarta, 3-7-2007.

51 Personal conversation with Chalik Hamid and Sulardjo, Duivendrecht, Netherlands, 24-2-2007.

partai dan negeri, did not prevent even some of these more critical LEKRA members from admiring the impressive scale and grand spectacle of the event. Nor did it keep the event from attracting attention and inspiring more experimentation. As noted, thousands of people watched the *sendratari* over its three night run in Jakarta, and many media reviews were highly positive. Furthermore, a very similar kind of *sendratari* was performed in Medan two nights later, on May 30th. Created by theatre actor and director Sy. Andjasmara and dancer Asmaralda, this production, *Mekarlah partai di mana-mana* (The party blossoms everywhere), also portrayed the history of the Communist Party in Indonesia and involved a similarly large number of dancers and choral singers.[52] *Djajalah partai dan negeri* itself was restaged at least twice after the May performances. According to Hersri Setiawan, the production was performed in Semarang with a cast of dancers from Java and was thus strongly influenced by Javanese dance movement styles, and again at the anniversary of the KSSR in late August 1965 in Jakarta.[53] Finally, on 3 September 1965, the PPI included two *sendratari* in its Malam Kesenian Tavip (Year of living dangerously Arts Night), both of which were performed by the Medan branch of PPI. These dance dramas, *Butet* and *Membangun dunia baru* (Building a new world) presented respectively the 'patriotic struggle of people of the Sumatran region of Tapanuli', and a satirical commentary on the United Nations, from which Indonesia had withdrawn, as tool of the United States.[54] But time was running out for experimentation. Within little over a month of the KSSR anniversary and the PPI *sendratari*, LEKRA, the PKI, PPI, and other leftist organizations were overtaken by the events of 30 September and 1 October, their achievements largely erased from history, living on only in the spectral form of a frightening cultural bogeyman.

CONCLUSION

LEKRA's modern national language theatre practices were a crucible for testing the fit for Indonesia of different ideologies and types of performance. Not only did Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Aidit, and others argue over 'socialist realism' and 'revolutionary realism', but playwrights such as P.H. Muid and Kusni Sulang actually set out to

52 'Sendratari "Mekarlah Partai di-mana-mana" sukses di Medan', *Harian Rakjat*, 20-6-1965.
53 Personal conversation with Hersi Setiawan, Jakarta, 27-6-2007.
54 See 'Sendratari "Butet" dan "Membangun dunia baru"', *Harian Rakjat*, 5-10-1965.

create dramatic works conforming in many respects to a 'revolutionary realist' aesthetic vision. All of these notions and forms were inspired by precursors and contemporaries in the Soviet Union and China, but achieved uniquely Indonesian emphases in the hands of LEKRA and PKI cultural workers and thinkers. Furthermore, LEKRA cultural workers like Kusni Sulang, Sujud, Sunardi, and Bambang Sokawati in Central Java marked LEKRA's contribution to the development of several new performance practices in Indonesia. Sulang was instrumental in both the creation of mobile 'Music and Dance Ensembles', and in the first effort to create drama based upon peasant experiences and performed chiefly by peasants themselves. Sujud, Sunardi, and Bambang Sokawati endeavoured to develop the new *sendratari* dance drama into a form that could clearly convey revolutionary content to large audiences of ordinary Indonesians. Nationalism and the creation of a 'culture with national character' were central features in these forms, sharing centre stage with glorification of the Communist Party.

Nonetheless, many members of LEKRA were critical of their ally, the PKI, in so far as it attempted to control their cultural movement. LEKRA seems to have been deeply divided over this, as can be seen in both Kusni Sulang's handling of party criticism of *Api di pematang*, and LEKRA and its members' split reactions to the KSSR. The production of the colossal *sendratari Djajalah partai dan negeri*, an attempt to duplicate the Chinese dance drama *Dongfang Hong*, also showed this ambivalent reaction. *Dongfang Hong* may well have helped further stimulate the PKI's and LEKRA's interest in developing *sendratari*, and many LEKRA members participated in mounting *Djajalah partai dan negeri*. Yet other LEKRA activists derided the colossal Indonesian *sendratari* as a '*jiplakan*', a plagiarism or copy of the earlier Chinese spectacle. In this way, *Djajalah partai dan negeri* also demonstrated the way in which ideas from outside Indonesia could elicit both creative and highly critical responses.

The tragic events that began on 30 September and 1 October 1965 and continued on into 1966, saw most Indonesian leftist organizations destroyed, their members slaughtered, imprisoned, or trapped in foreign exile. One tragedy had become the excuse for a much larger human cataclysm.[55] It is impossible to know where the experiments undertaken by LEKRA or the PKI in the realm of theatre and performance may eventually have led, given more time, or whether the tensions between LEKRA's cultural movement and the Communist Party might have grown into an open rift. Still, the modern national theatre of LEKRA and the PKI in the

55 See Roosa (2007) for an extensive discussion of this point.

first half of the 1960s in Central Java, as well as in other locations such as North Sumatra, was highly dynamic and varied. Through debates about the best forms for conveying revolutionary messages, and experiments with an array of performance genres and styles, this theatre challenges many previous accounts of LEKRA's cultural work during this period as uninteresting, stylistically separate from, or unremittingly antagonistic to other cultural groups of different ideological persuasions. It also shows the robust internationalism of the LEKRA movement, the complex relations LEKRA developed with other cultural groups and the Indonesian Communist Party, and the enormous creativity of LEKRA theatre workers.[56]

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Notes on Glossary

The 1950s-1960s period is riddled with organizations, acronyms and slogans. In preparing this volume and the translation of all papers between Indonesian and English, the translation of abbreviations, acronyms and organizational names proved problematic. The nature of the Indonesian language, which allows organizational names to be formed by piling up words without prepositions or distinctions between adjective and noun, creates a high level of ambiguity. It is often difficult to ascertain where the compounds lie. The word 'Indonesia', for instance, can be read as a location (organization X, in Indonesia) or as an adjective (Indonesian) that qualifies the other words in various possible ways. Familiarity with language of the period provides some light, but not always.

For instance, the 'Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia' (an advisory body to government established in 1948) could be translated as 'The Indonesian Institute of Culture' (namely, the Institute of Culture in Indonesia) or 'The Institute of Indonesian Culture'. A familiarity with the organization's stated mission decides the translation as the latter. Similarly, Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia (LESBUMI) could be translated as either 'The Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures' or 'The Indonesian Institute of Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures'. An understanding of this organization's aims and activities leads the choice of translation to the former. More commonly, the word 'Indonesia' refers to location and the period's stress on nation, as in Lembaga Musik Indonesia, translated as the Indonesian Music Institute (a music institute in Indonesia) rather than an institute for Indonesian music.

A similar confusion arises with other key words like 'nasional' or 'rakyat'. The Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA) could be translated as 'The People's Institute of Culture' or 'The Institute of People's Culture'. Again, familiarity with the key phrases of the time and the organization's own stated mission decides the translation as 'The Institute of People's Culture', just as the Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional is the 'Institute for National Culture' and not the 'National Institute of Culture', for 'kebudajaan nasional' ('national culture') was its concern, as also of the Badan Mus-

jawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (BMKN), the translation of which is 'Council for Deliberations on National Culture'. It is only the deliberate allusion to that semi-government organization that then leads the translation of Badan Musjawarah Kebudajaan Islam (BMKI) to be 'Council for Deliberations on Islamic Culture' rather than 'Islamic Council for Deliberations on Culture'.

At one stage in the editing of this book, with the need to standardize translations, and in desperate confusion about which translations to choose for many ambiguous names, I sent a list to Indonesian friends, including participants in this project, and asked them to insert prepositions and phrases to show their interpretations. To my surprise but also relief, I found their answers varied widely, and their different interpretations were revealed only when it came to inserting such markers. I then felt somewhat justified in making my choices. Wherever possible, the English translations try to represent the mission of the organization itself, and the period. However, when all is said and done, the Indonesian names retain ambiguity – whereas the English translations force choices that are finally my own.

JL

Glossary

Variant spellings of budaya/budaja, kebudayaan/kebudajaan; karya/karja, karjawan/karyawan; musjawarah/musjawarat and sjarikat/sarekat reflect actual use. The variant order 'Asia Africa' or 'Africa Asia' for AA also reflects actual use.

AMI	Angkatan Muda Indonesia-Indonesian Youth Regiment
AMPAI	American Movie Picture Association in Indonesia
AMS	Algemene Middelbare School – Junior high school
AMT	Angkatan Muda Tionghoa – Peranakan Chinese Youth Regiment
ANIEM	Algemeene Nederlandsch-Indische Electriciteit Maatschappij – Netherlands Indies Electric Company
API	Angkatan Pemuda Insyaf – Generation of Aware Youth
ASAS 50	Angkatan Sasterawan 50 – Generation of the Writers of 1950
ASC	Arts Study Club (formed by HSBI)
AVROM	Algemeene Vereeniging Radio Omroep Medan – Medan General Association for Radio Broadcasting
BAPERKI	Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia – Council for Deliberations on Indonesian Citizenship
BKDP	Badan Kesenian Djawa Barat – Body for West Javanese Arts
BKI	Badan Kesenian Indonesia – Body for Indonesian Arts
BKKII	Badan Kongres Kebudajaan Islam Indonesia – Council for the Indonesian Islamic Cultural Congress
BMKI	Badan Musjawarah Kebudajaan Islam – Council for Deliberations on Islamic Culture
BMKN	Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional – Council for Deliberations on National Culture

BPRI	Barisan Pemberontakan Rakjat Indonesia – Indonesian People's Resistance Front
BTI	Barisan Tani Indonesia – Indonesian Peasants' Front
CCF	Congress for Cultural Freedom
CGMI	Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia – Indonesian Student Movement Concentration
CONEFO	Conference of New Emerging Forces
DJAPENA	Djawatan Penerangan Agama – Division of Information on Religion
DJAREK	Djalannja Revolusi Kita – The Path of Our Revolution
DI	Darul Islam – Indonesian Islamic State, from the Arabic *dar al-Islam*
DPN	Direktorat Perfilman Negara – National Directorate of Film
FFAA	Festival Film Asia-Afrika – Asia-Africa Film Festival
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale – National Liberation Front (Algeria)
FRONSEMA	Fron Seniman Makassar – Makassar Artists' Front
GANEFO	Games of the New Emerging Forces
GAPERO	Gabungan Perusahaan Rokok – Association of Cigarette Companies
GASBIINDO	Gabungan Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia – Indonesian Association of Islamic Labour Unions
GERINDO	Gerakan Rakjat Indonesia – Indonesian People's Movement
GERWANI	Gerakan Wanita Indonesia – Indonesian Women's Movement
GESAS	Gelora Seni dan Budaya Anak Sekarang – The Spirit of Contemporary Youth in Art and Culture
GESTAPU	Gerakan Tigapuluh September – The 30th September movement
GESURI	Genta Suara Revolusi Indonesia – The Pealing Bell of the Indonesian Revolution
GMKI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia – Indonesian Protestant-Christian Students' Movement
GMNI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia – Indonesian National Students' Movement
HCS	Hollandsch-Chineesche School – Dutch Chinese School

HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam – Association of Muslim University Students
HSBI	Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam – Association for Islamic Arts and Culture
IAIN	Institut Agama Islam Negeri – State Islamic Institutes
IKAPI	Ikatan Asosiasi Penerbit Indonesia – Indonesian Publishers' Association
IPPHOS	Indonesia Press Photo Service
IPPI	Ikatan Pemuda Peladjar Indonesia – League of Indonesian Youth and Students
IPI	Ikatan Peladjar Indonesia – Indonesian Students' League
IPSI	Ikatan Penggemar Seni Indonesia – League of Indonesian Arts Lovers
ISBM	Ikatan Seniman Budajawan Muhammadijah – Muhammadiyah League of Artists and Cultural Figures
ISMI	Ikatan Sardjana Muslim Indonesia – League of Indonesian Muslim Graduates
ISTI	Ikatan Seni Tari Indonesia – Indonesian Dance League
ISTORA	Istana Olaraga Senayan – Senayan Sports Palace
KAMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia – Indonesian Student Action Union
KAPPI	Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Peladjar Indonesia – Indonesian Youth and Student Action Union
KBM	(Seniman) Kota Besar Makassar – Artists of the City of Makassar
KMB	Konferensi Medja Bundar – Round Table Conference
KIAA	Konferensi Islam Afrika-Asia – Africa-Asia Islamic Conference
KKPSI	Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang Se Indonesia – All-Indonesia Writers' Conference
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda – Union of Malay Youth, later changed to Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka – Malay Independence Union
KPAA	Konferensi Pengarang Asia Afrika – Asia-Africa Writers' Conference
KRIS	Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung – Malay Peninsula Indonesian People's Union later changed to Kekuatan Rakyat Istimewa – Special People's Special Forces

KSSR	Konfernas Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner – Conference on Revolutionary Literature and Art
KWAA	Konferensi Wartawan Asia Afrika – Conference of Asian and African Journalists
LAKSMI	Lembaga Kebudajaan Sjarikat Muslimin Indonesia – Cultural Institute of the Union of Indonesian Muslims
LASDI	Lembaga Akademi Seni Drama Indonesia – Institute for the Indonesian Academy of Drama
LEKRA	Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat – Institute of People's Culture
LEKRINDO	Lembaga Kebudajaan Kristen Indonesia – Indonesian Protestant-Christian Cultural Institute
LEKSI	Lembaga Kesenian Islam – Institute of Islamic Arts
LESBI	Lembaga Seni Budaja Indonesia – Institute for Indonesian Arts and Culture
LESBUMI	Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia – Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures [note: LESBUMI's 1962 statute spells Budayawan with a 'y', but it was also frequently written as Lembaga Seniman Budajawan Muslim Indonesia]
LESDRA	Lembaga Seni Drama – Institute of Dramatic Art
LESFIRA	Lembaga Seni Film dan Drama – Institute of Film and Dramatic Art
LISTIBIYA	Madjelis Pertimbangan dan Pembinaan Kebudajaan – Council for the Evaluation and Development of Culture
LKI	Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia – Institute of Indonesian Culture
LKKI	Lembaga Kebudajaan Katolik Indonesia – Indonesian Catholic Cultural Institute
LKN	Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional – Institute of National Culture
LMI	Lembaga Musik Indonesia – Indonesian Music Institute
LPKB	Lembaga Persatuan dan Kesatuan Bangsa – Institute for National Union and Unity
MANIKEBU	Manifes Kebudayaan – Cultural Manifesto
MANIPOL	(also Manipol-Usdek) Manifesto Politik – Soekarno's 1959 Political Manifesto
MASBI	Madjelis Seniman Budajawan Islam – Council of Islamic Artists and Cultural Figures

MASJUMI	(MASYUMI) Majelis Sjura Muslimin Indonesia – Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims
MMAA	Ministerial Meeting of Asia-Africa
MSDR	Masjarakat Seniman Djakarta Raja – Djakarta Society of Artists
MULO	Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs – Junior secondary school
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NAPINDO	Nasional Pelopor Indonesia – Indonesian National Pioneers
NASAKOM	Nasionalisme Agama Komunisme – Soekarno's ideological formulation that called for a united front of nationalist, religious and communist elements in Indonesian political life
NEFO	New Emerging Forces
NEKOLIM	Neo-kolonialisme dan Imperalisme – Neo-colonialism/ist and imperalism/ist
NIT	Negara Indonesia Timur – State of Eastern Indonesia
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama – Revival of Islamic Scholars
OISRAA	Organisasi Indonesia untuk Setiakawan Rakjat Asia-Afrika – Indonesian Organization for the Solidarity of the People of Asia-Africa
OLDEFO	Old Established Forces
OKRA	Organisasi Kebudajaan Rakjat – Organization for People's Culture
ORSENIM	Organisasi Seniman Muda – Organisation of Young Artists
PARTINDO	Partai Indonesia – Indonesia Party
PELSEDRA	Peladjar Seni Drama – Drama Students' Group
Perfini	Perusahaan Film Nasional – National Film Company
PERHIMI	Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia – Indonesian University Students' Association
PERMESTA	Piagam Perjuangan Semesta Alam – Universal Struggle Charter
PERSARI	Perseroan Artis Indonesia, – Indonesian Artists Inc.
PERTI	Pergerakan Tarbijah Islamijah – Islamic Education Movement
PFN	Perusahaan Film Negara – State Film Corporation
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia – Indonesian Communist Party

PKMM	Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya – Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya
PMB	Persuratan Melayu Baharu – New Malay Literary Association
PMKRI	Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Indonesia – Indonesian Catholic Students' Association
PMII	Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia – Indonesian Muslim Student Movement
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia – Indonesian National Party
PNM	Partai Nasionalis Malaya – Nationalist Party of Malaya
POSTD	Perkumpulan Olah Raga, Seni Tari dan Dharmawisata – Organization for Sports, Dance and Tourism
PPI	Persatuan Peladjar Indonesia – Association of Indonesian Students
PPI (Baperki)	Permusjawaratan Pemuda Indonesia – Indonesian Youth Deliberations
PPFI	Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia – Union of Indonesian Film Companies
P.P.& K./PPDK/P&K	(Departemen) Pendidikan, Pengamatan dan Kebudajaan – (Department of) Education, Training and Culture later, Departemen Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Kebudayaan (DPPK) – Department of Education, Teaching and Culture and later still Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (P & K) – Education and Culture
PPU	Pusat Pergaulan Umum – Social Centre
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRI	Partai Rakjat Indonesia – Indonesian People's Party
PRRI	Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia – Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic
PSI	Partai Sosialis Indonesia – Indonesian Socialist Party
PSII	Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia/ Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia – Indonesian Islamic Union Party
PTAIN	Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri – State Islamic University
PWI	Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia – Indonesian Journalists' Union
RESOPIM	Revolusi, Sosialisme dan Pimpinan – Revolution, Socialism and Leadership

RIS	Republik Indonesia Serikat – Federated Republic of Indonesia
RPA	Republik Persatuan Arab – United Arab Republic, UAR
RRC	Republik Rakyat Cina – People's Republic of China
RRDK	Republik Rakjat Demokratik Korea – People's Democratic Republic of Korea [North Korea]
RRI	Radio Republik Indonesia – Indonesian National Radio
RRT	Republik Rakjat Tiongkok – during Soekarno period, name used for PRC
SARBUFI	Sarekat Buruh Film – Film Workers Union
SARBUFIS	Sarekat Buruh Film dan Sandiwara – Film and Stage Workers Union
SAVAM	Sport en Amusement Vereniging Malang – Association of Sports and Amusement, Malang
SBKA	Serikat Buruh Kereta Api – Railway Workers Union
Sendratari	Seni-drama-tari – artistic dance drama
SIM	Seniman Indonesia Muda – Young Artists of Indonesia
SKG	Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang (also Surat Kepertjajaan Gelanggang) – Gelanggang Testamonial of Beliefs
SOBSI	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia – All-Indonesia Trade Union Federation
STICUSA	Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking – The [Dutch] Foundation for Cultural Co-operation
STOVIA	School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen – School for Training of Indigenous Physicians
TAKEM	Tahun Kemenangan – Year of Victory
TAVIP	Tahun Vivere Pericoloso – The Year of Living Dangerously (1964)
TII	Tentara Islam Indonesia – Indonesian Islamic Army
UAR	United Arab Republic
UIN	Universitas Islam Negeri – State Islamic University
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
USDEK	UUD 1945, Sosialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Ekonomi Terpimpin, Kepribadian Indonesia – The principles summarized in the acronym USDEK were: UUD 1945 (the 1945 Constitution),

	Indonesian-style Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy and Indonesian Identity
USIA	United States Information Agency (known outside the United States as USIS, United States Information Service)
USIS	United States Information Service *see* USIA
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UUD 1945	Undang-undang 1945 – 1945 Constitution
VOA	Voice of America

Important dates

17 August 1945	Proclamation of Indonesian independence
12 November 1946	Linggajati agreement signed. Dutch recognize the Republic as authority in Java, Sumatra and Madura.
20 July 1947	Dutch attack the Republic to occupy West Java, Madura, East Java and Semarang, and areas around Medan, Palembang and Padang. Ceasefire at end July.
17 January 1948	New 'Renville' agreement with Dutch.
February 1948	Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking, (STICUSA, Dutch Institution for Cultural Co-operation) founded in Amsterdam (Jakarta representative arrives January 1949)
20-24 August 1948	First Cultural Congress (Kongres Kebudajaan) in Magelang. Lembaga Kebudayaan Indonesia (LKI) established.
September 1948	Communist uprising in Madiun
18 December 1948	Dutch launch second attack to crush the Republic
7 August 1949	Darul Islam movement, based in West Java, declares the establishment of Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic State). Rebellion continues until 1957-1958.
27 December 1949	Transfer of sovereignty from Netherlands to Indonesia
18 February 1950	Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang (Testimonial of Beliefs) signed
14 April 1950	Proclamation of Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS)
4-6 August 1950	Konferensi Kebudajaan (Culture Conference) Jakarta

6 August 1950	Angkatan Sasterawan 50 (ASAS 50, Association of 1950 writers) founded in Malaya (Singapore), with slogan '*sastra untuk masyarakat*'
16 August 1950	Dissolution of Republik Indonesia Serikat and return to Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia, (NKRI, Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia)
17 August 1950	Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat (LEKRA) founded and first Mukadimah (preamble) drawn up and signed
23 October 1950	Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang published
17 August 1951	Rebellion under leadership of Kahar Muzakkar in South Sulawesi
6-11 October 1951	Cultural Congress in Bandung (LKI organized)
14 April 1952	LKI amalgamated into a larger advisory body called Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (BMKN, Deliberative Body for National Culture)
7 August 1953	Kahar Muzakkar in South Sulawesi announces his rebellion is now part of Negara Islam Indonesia (Darul Islam movement).
21 September 1953	Rebellion in Aceh
July 1954	First official state cultural mission (*misi kesenian negara*) tours PRC (July-October)
18-23 September 1954	Kongres Kebudayaan Indonesia (organized by BMKN), Solo
18-24 April 1955	Asia-Africa Meeting in Bandung
July 1955	LEKRA national conference. A revised Mukadimah drawn up.
29 September 1955	First General Elections (for Members of Parliament) and in December for Members of Constituent Assembly
January 1956	STICUSA representing Indonesia formally abolished
May 1956	President Soekarno visits the United States (visits Hollywood, addresses Congress)
24 September 1956	Himpunan Seni Budaya Islam (HSBI) established
21 December 1956	Detention of writer Mochtar Lubis

21 February 1957	President Soekarno announces '*konsepsi*' for *gotong royong* parliament of major parties, and NASAKOM alliance.
2 March 1957	Piagam Perjuangan Semesta Alam (Permesta, Universal Struggle Charter) declared in Makassar. Permesta rebellion begins.
14 March 1957	Martial law declared
March 1957	Members of PPFI (The Association of Indonesian Film Companies) close their studios for 2 months in protest at overwhelming import of foreign film (especially from India)
20-24 July 1957	Kongres Kebudayaan (organized by BMKN), Bali
August 1957	State cultural mission tours Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, USSR, Egypt (August-November)
15 February 1958	Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI, The Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) proclaimed in Padang (West Sumatra)
September 1958	Masjumi and PSI banned in regions of rebellion for perceived sympathy with PRRI
22-28 January 1959	LEKRA holds national congress in Solo, and its 1957 manifesto officially adopted
20 May 1959	Lembaga Kebudajaan Nasional (LKN, Institute for National Culture) holds national congress in Solo and is officially inaugurated
5 July 1959	Presidential Decree. Indonesia 'returned to 1945 Constitution'. Constituent Assembly dissolved.
17 August 1959	Soekarno's Political Manifesto (MANIPOL-USDEK) sets out ideology of Guided Democracy
16-20 July 1960	Kongres Kebudayaan, (organized by BMKN) Bandung
August 1960	Masjumi and PSI banned
September 1960	Soekarno's second visit to the US. Addresses the UN.
December 1960-March 1961	'Floating Fair' cultural mission to Honolulu, Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore

January 1961	Formation of Madjelis Seniman Budajawan Islam (MASBI)
15 April 1961	Presidential Decree restricting number of political parties to eight
April-October 1961	Darul Islam, PRRI and Permesta rebels surrender
14 July 1961	Mochtar Lubis detained again (after release in April)
September-November 1961	State cultural missions to USSR, PRC, North Korea, North Vietnam
15-17 December 1961	Musjawarah Seniman Budayawan Islam held in Jakarta organized by MASBI and HSBI
28 July 1962	Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslimin Indonesia (LESBUMI) established
15 August 1962	Agreement on West Irian finally achieved with Dutch agreeing to transfer territory to UN interim administration on 1 October
December 1963	Badan Musjawarah Kebudajaan Islam (BMKI) established
March 1963	State cultural mission to the Philippines
4 April 1963	Konfrontasi (Confrontation) against Malaysia announced
1 May 1963	UN entrusts West Irian to Indonesia (administration taken from the Netherlands in October 1962)
1963	LEKRA-sponsored cultural delegation to PRC, North Vietnam, North Korea
17 August 1963	Manifes Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto) published
November 1963	Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) Jakarta
March 1964	State cultural mission to Pakistan
March-November 1964	Indonesian arts delegation at the New York World's Fair; to the Netherlands and France in November
April 1964	Festival Film Afrika-Asia (FFAA) III (Jakarta)
8 May 1964	Cultural Manifesto banned
9 May 1964	PAPFIAS (Panitia Aksi Pemboikotan Film Imperialis Amerika Serikat, Committee for the Boycott of American Imperialist Films) formed.

May-June 1964	State cultural mission to Cambodia and Japan
27 August-2 September 1964	Konfernas Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner (KSSR National Conference of Revolutionary Literature and Art) Jakarta
January 1965	Indonesia withdraws from United Nations
March 1965	Indonesia announces its withdrawal from second year of New York World's Fair
March 1965	Konferensi Islam Afrika-Asia (KIAA), Bandung
May 1965	PKI's 45th anniversary celebrations in Jakarta (includes staging of *Djalalah partai dan negeri*), 26-28 May
May-July 1965	State cultural mission to PRC, North Korea, Japan
30 September-1 October 1965	30 September movement announces estabishment of 'Revolutionary Council'. Counter-coup led by General Suharto.
9 October 1965	Parliament (DPR-GR) passes resolution to impeach Soekarno
October 1965-February 1966	Mass killings of PKI members and those perceived to be aligned or sympathetic to PKI or leftist organizations. (Massacres particularly intense in East Java and Bali rural areas.)
October 1965-1969	Rounding up and imprisonment of communists, communist or leftist sympathisers, and those perceived to have any leftist connections; most held without trial until late 1970s, many longer
11 March 1966	General Suharto's formal accession to power
12 March 1966	PKI and LEKRA banned (TAP MPRS.25/1966)
21 June 1970	Death of (ex-President) Soekarno (under house arrest)

Notes on Indonesian journals and newspapers cited in this volume

Indonesian journals and magazines of the 1950s and early 1960s, (called '*madjalah*' or '*madjallah*'), often have complicated and confusing systems of publication reference. The first number, frequently in roman numerals, usually refers to the consecutive year of publication, (First year, Th I; second year Th II and so forth). However, the year of publication does not necessarily follow the calendar year, running from January-December. More often, it changes with the anniversary of the beginning of the magazine. Sometimes, when a magazine changes its place of publication, it renumbers the year of publication starting again from 1. In some cases, the year of publication follows the Islamic year. The number appearing after the year of publication refers to the issue of the journal or magazine. If a monthly publication, the issue number usually reflects the calendar month (so 1 is for January if following the Western year). However, if an issue is missed, these numbers get out of sequence, or sometimes issues are combined. The same can be true when the issue is weekly or fortnightly.

In order to minimize confusion, and to facilitate tracing of sources by future researchers, we have included in citations the dates of publication where this helps to clarify the situation. For instance, the fortnightly *Gema Islam*'s year of publication starts the second week of January and not January 1 (this issue belongs to the previous publication year); or *Budaya*, which has a complicated publication history renumbering when it moved from Bandung to Yogyakarta, and a Sundanese language publication with a different spelling, *Budaja* that continued to be published in Bandung; or the monthly cultural journal *Indonesia* which changed numbering, name and publishers.

Details to help clarify the numbering of some confusing journals and dailies most frequently cited in this book are summarized here:

Bintang Timur (*Bintang Timoer*)
Newspaper initially published in 1926 as *Bintang Timoer*. *Bintang Timur* ceased publishing in 1965.

'*Lentera*' is the name of the cultural supplement in the Sunday issue of *Bintang Timur*, which appeared weekly from 16 March, 1962. *Lentera* has its own separate numbering that indicates the date, the number and the year of that supplement. (For example: Minggu 24 Nopember 1963. Nomor 36 tahun II.)

Budaja
Monthly journal published in Bandung by P. P. & K. (in Sundanese). Issues begin in November 1952 with number 1. The year of publication (Th 1) runs into 1953 (does not follow the calendar year commencing with January) and runs November-October. [Also see *Budaya*.]

Budaja [Sulawesi]
Name of cultural segment of *Pandji Negara*, a weekly newspaper founded in 1948 and produced by the NIT Department of Information.

Budaya
Monthly journal initially published (in Indonesian) by P. P. & K. in Bandung from 1948-1952 (issues 1-28). Th I (Year 1) is 1949; Th II (year 2) is 1950; Th III is 1951; Th IV is 1952. Roman numerals refer to year of publication – 1st, 2nd 3rd and 4th years. Issues are numbered consecutively and continuously – they do not run 1-12 per calendar year.

In November 1952 *Budaya* moved to Yogyakarta, and the publication was taken over by P. P. & K. Yogyakarta. Issues begin with number 1. The November 1952 issue is Th (year) I, no. 1. Thus in 1952 there was both a *Budaya* year IV and a *Budaya* year I. The January 1953 issue of *Budaya* is Th (year) II, number 1. Commencing January 1953, issues of *Budaya* are numbered 1-12 by calendar month and the year of publication changes in January (January 1954 is Year III issue 1 and so forth).

Gema Islam
Magazine published fortnightly. The first issue is marked No. 1 Th I, 15 Djanuari 1962. The year of publication (with roman numeral)

does not follow the calendar year exactly, as it changes with the second issue in January, the January 1 issue being the last one of the previous year (thus year II starts 15 January 1963, but the 1 January 1963 issue is still year I).

Harian Rakjat
A PKI affiliated daily newspaper that began publishing in 1951. The numbering indicates the year, the issue and the date (Th 2 issue 344, 1 Sept 1952).

Hikmah
Hikmah began as a monthly journal in 1948. From 1 August 1948, it was named 'Hikmah, Madjallah Islam Progressif'. The year follows the Islamic calendar, with the Islamic date given in full before the Western date (27 Hapil 1367/ 1 October 1948; Rabi'ul Awal 1368/ Djanuari 1949). From 1952, it was published weekly and renamed '*Hikmah, mingguan Islam populer*'. The publication year continued with renaming, so 1952 is year V, with the year continuing to follow the Islamic calendar. Weekly issues are numbered consecutively within the Islamic year: 13 Djumadilachir 1378/31 Desember 1958 No. 36 tahun XI. Sometimes an issue covers more than one week, particularly for 'special issues' like Islamic New Year or Idul Fitri, thus the number of issues per year fluctuates.

Indonesia
Monthly cultural journal that changes publishers, numbering, and the way of presenting its title. Commenced publishing in 1949 (Th I No 1, 1949) by Balai Pustaka with the title *Indonesia*. From August 1949 (No 7), the title becomes *Indonesia Madjalah Kebudajaan*. From Issue No. 10 (November 1949) the title is presented as *Indonesia. Madjalah Seni dan Kebudajaan. Gelanggang, fikiran dan perasaan merdeka*. This title is used until the last issue published by Balai Pustaka, 5 May 1950.

In June-July 1950 the journal was taken over by the Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia, and numbering started anew. The title reverted to:

Indonesia, Madjalah Kebudajaan (No. I-II Djuni-Djuli 1950 Th ke 1). In August 1952, the journal was taken over by Badan Musjawarat Kebudajaan Nasional (the previous Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia having been subsumed into BMKN). The title does not change,

and the numbering of the journal continues. *Indonesia. Madjalah Kebudajaan* August no. 8, th III 1952.

From January 1959, the magazine was published by Jajasan Penerbit Kebudajaan, under BMKN. ('…mulai no. 1/Th X/59 madjalah "Indonesia" diterbitkan atas nama JAJASAN PENERBIT KEBUDAJAAN, sebagai suatu badan jang menampung usaha2 penerbitan bersipat kebudajaan dilingkungan BADAN MUSYAWARAT KEBUDAJAAN NASIONAL').

The numbering of issues changes in 1960. The journal becomes a quarterly numbered 1-4. 1961 has only 3 issues, then one (unnumbered) issue through to June 1963. The next issue is July 1965, and *Indonesia* is published monthly twice more until September 1965, when it ends.

Konfrontasi (1954-1960)
A Jakarta based cultural and literary magazine published every two months by the publisher Pustaka Rakjat. It started publishing in 1954 with the July-Agustus (Juli-Agustus) issue. Each issue is numbered consecutively, by date and number only (e.g. No. 20 September-Oktober 1957). Occasional issues note the year of publication (e.g. Tahun ke 3), but this was not the practice for most of the magazine's history. When so noted, the year of publication runs from July/August – May/June.

Lembaga (Sulawesi)
The cultural supplement of the Makassar daily *Marhaen (Harian Marhaen)*. It started publishing in 1955, so 1955 is tahun ke-I: numbers move consecutively, do not renumber with each year.

Lentera
See *Bintang Timur*

Mimbar Indonesia (1947-1966).
Weekly magazine founded in Jakarta in 1947. The first issue started with number 1, year I (no.1, tahun I, 10 Nopember 1947) Year II starts in January 1948 (no. 1, tahun II 3 Djanuari 1948).

The cultural supplement of *Mimbar Indonesia* , titled *Zenith*, started publishing on 15 January 1951 (tahun I, no.1, 15 Djanuari 1951). The year changes in January 1952 (tahun II no.1-2-3- Januari s.d.

Maret 1952). *Zenith* appeared monthly, around the 15th of every month but not always regularly. For instance, in the second year, 1 cultural supplement covered the months of January, February and March (no. 1-2-3).

Pandji Masjarakat (1959-1966). (*Panjimas* 1997-2001)
Fortnightly magazine founded and published by the Jajasan Nurul Islam. The magazine started publication 15 June 1959, as nr. 1, year I. (Pandji Masjarakat nr 1, tahun ke 1, 15 Djuni 1959). Year II starts in January 1960 (no.14, tahun ke II, tgl. 1 Djanuari 1960). In 1966 it starts with new numbering on 5 October with no. 1, year I (1, th.I, 5 Oktober 1966). After a 30 year break, the magazine reappeared in 1997 with new numbering (nr 00 tahun I, 3 Februari 1997) and with a new name, Panjimas, published weekly. The name of the publisher changed to PT Panji Media Nusantara. Publication ceased in 2001.

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In June 1956, the journal was reborn as *Zaman Baru* after a lapse of a year, and numbering also started afresh. The numbering of *Zaman Baru* indicates the month (as name and/or number) and the calendar year, expressed in various ways: (no. III/IV 1964; no. 7/8 1964; Djanuari 1965; nomor 2 (Februari) 1965). For numbers 3 and 4 of 1965, which are entirely focused on Asia-Afrika, the indication of the year is missing (No. 3: Asia-Afrika).

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KEMANUSIAAN YANG ADIL DAN BERADAB

PERSATUAN INDONESIA

KERAKYATAN YANG DIPIMPIN OLEH HIKMAT KEBIJAK-SANAAN DALAM PERMUSYAWARATAN / PERWAKILAN

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